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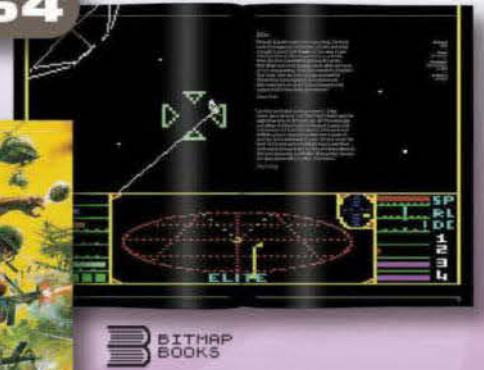
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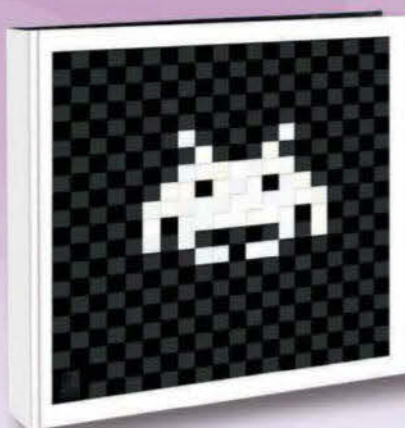
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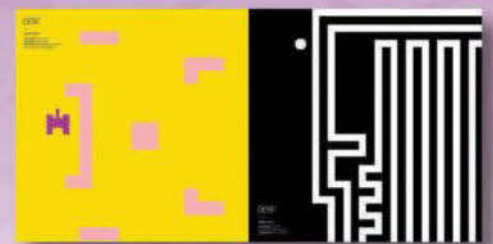


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LEAVE A MESSAGE



HELLO, YOU'VE REACHED the desk of Luke Albigés. I'm not available right now as I'm too busy playing *Bloodborne*. Please leave your message after the tone and I might get back to you one day. Maybe.

BEEP.

"Yeah hi, I heard you played *Final Fantasy XV*, I was just wondering how it was?"

Click.

It was wonderful, friend. *Wonderful*. There are few things that can interrupt my *Bloodborne* time but extolling the many virtues of *FFXV* is certainly one of them. Square continues to do an amazing job of reinventing *Final Fantasy* and anyone who though *FFXIII* was too linear (so more or less everyone) is sure to enjoy just how open *XV* is. Not only do we have hands-on impressions of the game as it stands, but we also spoke with director Hajime Tabata to get his take on this JRPG renaissance, plus we've looked into all the other awesome stuff that's going on in *Final Fantasy* right now, from updates to *A Realm Reborn* to all the new games you could be playing on a PlayStation platform before the year is out. It's awesome.

BEEP.

"*Final Fantasy* sucks lol what else you got?"

Click.

I don't usually negotiate with trolls but I'll make an exception on this occasion as you formulated such an open-minded question. Perhaps you'd like to see a bunch of kick-ass new Vita games? Or to have your mind blown by a list of reasons to buy *The Phantom Pain*, so convincing that you'll wake up to a pre-order you never knew you placed? Or maybe you're just here for our usual spread of straight-talking reviews and previews, the likes of which the Internet only *wishes* it had? We got you covered in this, the celebration of all things PlayStation.

Enjoy the issue and I'll see ya online...

LUKE ALBIGÉS

DEPUTY EDITOR
@LukemonMGJ
PSN: PorthMinster

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08

FINAL FANTASY

A new breed of RPG
marches onto PS4

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Looks like these guys could do with a bath...

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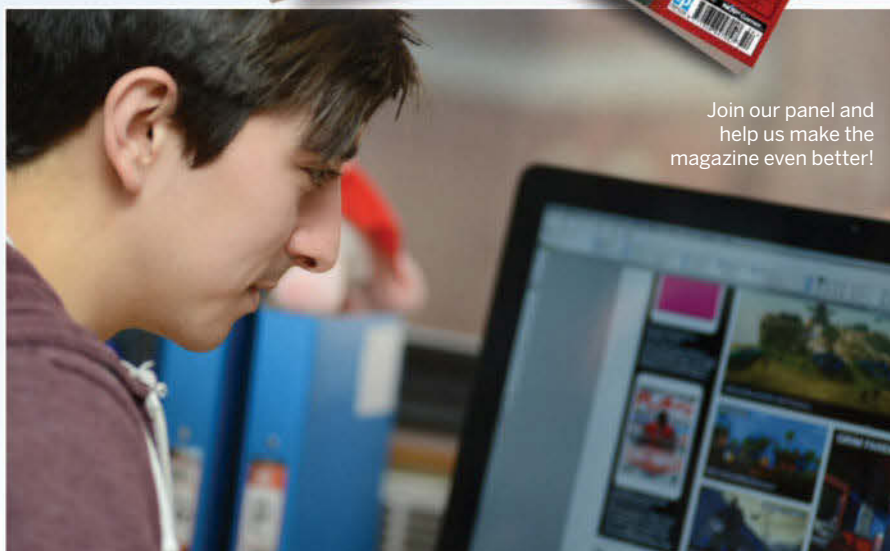
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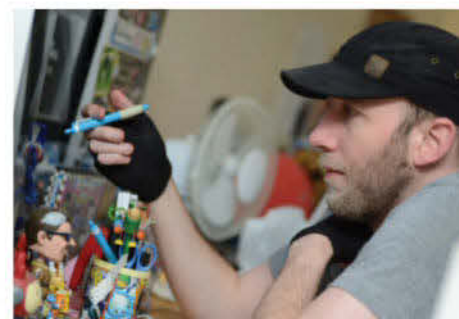
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FEATURE | FINAL FANTASY

A FANTASY BASED



ON REALITY

HOW SQUARE ENIX'S
LEGENDARY SERIES
WILL LEVEL UP ON PS4

When you think about RPGs, it's likely that *Final Fantasy* will be the first thing that comes to mind. As such, all eyes are on Square to blaze a trail as the franchise marches onto PS4 – few developers are better poised to put the hardware through its paces, and the series is renowned for its cutting-edge visuals and innovative new mechanics. *XV* is finally playable, *XIV* is growing and there are yet more new *Final Fantasy* games on the way too, as you're about to find out...



FINAL FANTASY XV

A NEW ERA IS UPON US, AND THE JAPANESE RPG IS A DIFFERENT BEAST TODAY TO WHAT IT WAS JUST A FEW YEARS AGO. WE'VE BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH TO PLAY A BIT OF XV, AND OUR EARLY IMPRESSIONS OF THIS STUNNING SEQUEL ARE INCREDIBLY POSITIVE...

We've been patient. We've had to be, really. Apparently, getting games up to PS4 standards takes a good deal longer than we are used to, as shown by hefty delays to simple releases like shooters, racing games and even low-key indie titles. It stands to reason, then, that a true next-gen epic should take longer to bake, hence why there's so little in the way of proper RPGs on PS4 so far. But that's about to change – *Final Fantasy Type-0* might be a port of a PSP game, but its +1 is clearly a glimpse of The Next Big Thing. *Final Fantasy XV* represents a huge leap forward for the franchise, mechanically and visually, and what you've seen in *Episode Duscae* is just the beginning.

But what a beginning, though. From the stunning *Oblivion*-style open world

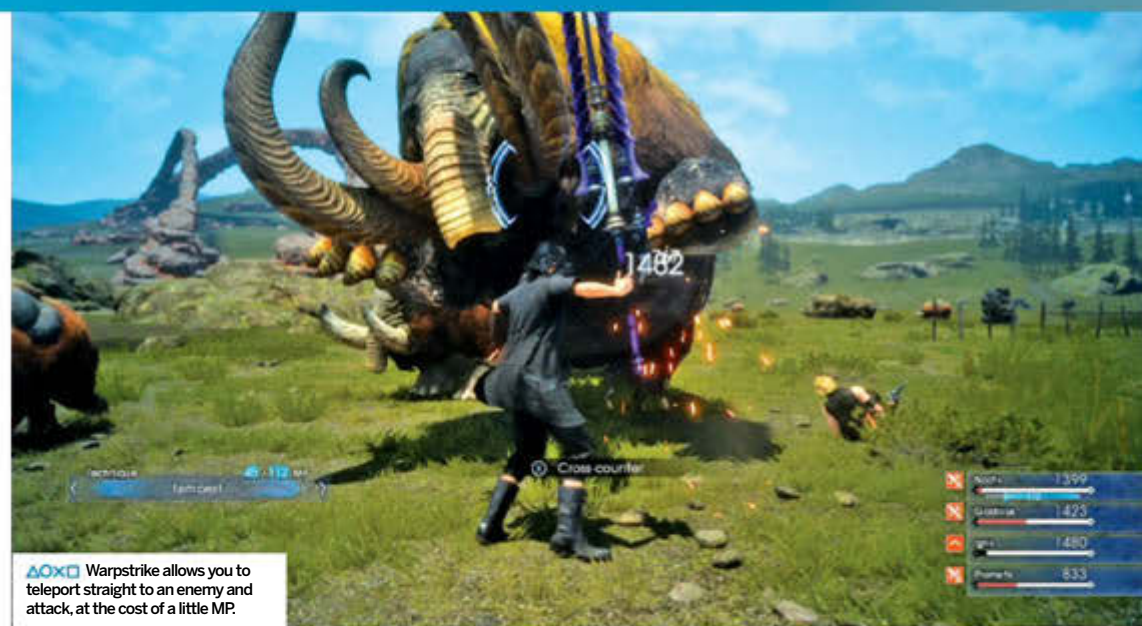
reveal when you first emerge from your tent, to finally getting your head around real-time combat well enough to survive entire encounters unscathed, it's the perfect crash course in relearning everything you thought you knew about the JRPG. Recent *FF* games like *Lightning Returns* and *Type-0* actually help quite a fair bit in the transitioning process – more in line with the *Kingdom Hearts* games or superbly relaunched MMO *A Realm Reborn* than traditional *Final Fantasy* turn-based action, it's all about involvement and interactivity these days, and that's no bad thing.

We'll be honest here: it took us a good while to fully adapt to *FFXV*'s new combat system. Only directly controlling the party leader is nothing new, but *XV* takes the action slant seen in the last



△× Imperial forces drop into combat all the time. Kill them all.

“IT TOOK US A GOOD WHILE TO ADAPT TO FFXV'S NEW COMBAT SYSTEM – IT'S CLOSER TO DMC THAN TO ITS FORERUNNERS”



△× Warpstrike allows you to teleport straight to an enemy and attack, at the cost of a little MP.

few releases to its logical conclusion, to the point where it's actually closer to hardcore character action games like *Revengeance* or *Devil May Cry* than it is to its forerunners. Actually, *El Shaddai* is a better (if lesser known) comparison – the emphasis is on making the impressive action as simple as possible, to the point that there's just one attack button that serves different contextual purposes. On paper, it's dangerously oversimplified but in practice, it works brilliantly and the system is easily bent to your will or play style after just a brief adjustment period.

Basically, what the Square button does when you press it to attack enemies is determined by the loadout you have selected and the status of the target. Hero Noctis is a master of pulling swords



△×□ Parrying a Goblin Punch is one of the most satisfying things we've done in ages.

out of nowhere and you have five slots in which to equip the various weapons you find and forge, with each offering different attack speeds, perks and extra abilities depending on how it is being used.

To simplify it somewhat, you can equip gear to your combo opener, chain attack and finisher, as well as your counter and aerial attacks. In practical terms, it's quite a lot like *FFXII*'s Gambit system only with weapons instead of actions that are being selected – trigger a finisher or airborne attack and it's the pre-selected weapon that determines the effect rather than a specific input or prompt. This has established a new meta-game of picking the tools that will serve you best in their assigned roles, so while a large or heavy weapon will do mad damage on a successful counter, you could instead elect to use these heavy duty weapons as your primary combo tool, slowing your normal attack strings down in exchange for solid damage without needing to trigger the other criteria to bring additional weapons into play.

It's a remarkably complex and versatile system for one that technically offers just five options, and one that's satisfying to play as well. There's a tangible weight to *XV*'s combat and the weapons you settle on allow this to be tailored to how you like to play – smaller swords allow you to slash up the place with ease, while the stronger weapons recall the deliberate, punishing strikes of *Monster*

Hunter's most powerful weapons. It's no coincidence that *Type-0*'s Cinque has a move set that apes *MH*'s hammer, right down to the charged attacks. Capcom's hunting games are a clear influence on *Final Fantasy*'s divergence into real-time combat, and that's no bad thing. Other *Type-0* characters play like various different *MH* archetypes, the key difference here being the ability to mix and match to your liking – why would you want or need to change character when the one you have can be moulded into the play style of your choosing? Come the final game, you'll need to be balancing the passive and active skills

△×□ The cow-tipping mini-game is a lot of fun.



△×□ Nearby allies can lend a hand following a successful parry.

FEATURE | FINAL FANTASY

offered with the move sets themselves to find your optimal loadout, although it's clear already that certain weapons will need to find a way into your arsenal based on the skills they unlock alone – the Zweihander's Tempest ability, for instance, is perfect for crowd control, even if the weapon itself doesn't seem all that useful at a glance. Assign it into a generally less practical slot (aerial attacks or counters) and you'll reap the benefits without much in the way of drawbacks.

XV's structure is also worthy of discussion, and even in *Duscae*, there are signs of a more freeform *FF* than the *XIII* generation might be used to. The demo's core conceit is that money needs to be raised to fix the car and while hunting a Behemoth is the most implausibly convenient way to fund this, the open-ended structure means that odd jobs, treasure-hunting and general battling can all fatten your wallet sufficiently if you put enough time into them. After *FFXIII*, it's refreshing to see objectives that can



be achieved in a number of ways and it gives us hope for the full game – XV could comfortably just be a sequence of sandboxes with a single goal in each if they all look this good and offer this much freedom in reaching your targets.

As glorious as it looks, though, it must be said that XV doesn't run especially smoothly right now. With a lot of enemies on screen at once, frame-rates can tumble into dangerously low figures, although it's worth noting that the same criticism has been levelled at most recent *FF* games based on early builds – optimisation tends to be one of the last things on the developmental agenda and

both *XIII* and *Lightning Returns* both ran pretty poorly in early demos, only to be massively tightened up before release. It looks lovely either way and while there's noticeably less detail in the in-game models than the cutscene ones (such as the close-up of Stella in the reveal trailer), the minutia and epic sense of scale more than make up for the slight graphical cutbacks. When you get to see just how massive *Duscae* is, you'll have an idea of what to expect from the full game. It's looking like being a series of sprawling Gran Pulse-esque plains interconnected by roads (where you can expect to hear your crew spill glorious exposition



GO WITH THE FLOW

When is basic combat not actually all that basic?
When even the terminology needs explaining...

CRUSH

The first hit of any attack string will use the weapon assigned to the Crush slot, typically a large blade with which to stagger your foe and set up a few guaranteed free hits. Failing that, a quicker weapon will make it easier to land that all-important initial hit, while a weapon that applies a debuff may allow you to tear sizable holes in a weakened foe's health.

RAVAGE

Your standard auto-combo, sustained either by holding or mashing Square. Again, the choice here is whether to equip a fast weapon for a rapid barrage of blows or go for a heavy-hitting tool to really make every hit count and hit like a train. Weak weapons with various status effects could work wonders here, if your combo skills are up to the challenge.

VANQUISH

This finishing move will use the relevant equipped weapon to automatically finish combos on weakened enemies, or it can be manually triggered by delaying a press of Square after a Ravage combo, *DMC*-style. The stronger the weapon, the earlier in the combo the automatic killing blow will be unleashed, so power is definitely king here.

COUNTER

Parrying is far from easy but after landing one, this determines the weapon you'll use to strike back and the special moves you'll pull off when you do just that. Given that the counter-hit is guaranteed, you can safely equip something stupidly big here without fear of the strike coming out too slowly – again, raw power wins out over pretty much anything else.

DESCEND

This determines the weapon used when unleashing a jumping attack, a mechanic which is somewhat less developed in *Duscae* than it promises to be in the final game. While Crush is intended to be the opening gambit, you can still get Crush to come out after a Descend attack, making jumping in with a weapon with decent range and power a great opener.



“SIMILARITIES TO THE KINGDOM HEARTS GAMES ARE RIFE – EVERYTHING FROM THE ACTION-HEAVY COMBAT TO THE SCORE REEKS OF THE DISNEY CROSSOVER”

and ludicrous banter about personal hygiene alike), with loads to do in each location. Given the scale of Duscae, we'd be surprised if unlocking the inevitable airship actually allowed free flight on a world map, although there's still a chance that Square could give us a pared-back version of the overworld to explore from the air just as it did in the PSone games. We'd rather that than *FFX*'s menu-driven travel system, for sure.

Coming away from our hands-on time with *XV*, we realised just how accurate one of our early assertions actually was. Similarities to the *Kingdom Hearts* games are rife and while it might not be quite so colourful or draped in needless belts, everything from the simple, action-heavy combat to the wonderful score reeks of the Disney crossover. Which makes sense really, since it was actually the *KH* team working on the game



Silly Noctis thinks he's a car. He's not a car. He's a person.

back when it was *Versus XIII*. Instead of cartoon characters, *XV* is about real people (magic people, but still real ones) with real problems – 'a fantasy based on reality' is how the game is being billed and it's not hard to see why. Elements like the modern car and relatively sensible attire, familiar locations like petrol stations and shops, believable themes that haven't

yet started to descend into 'amnesiac hero saves the world from ultimate evil' silliness... it all adds up to make this one of the most refreshing and novel *FF* titles in a long time, and it's all due to the restraint with which fantasy elements are used when so many other RPGs elect to take this to the other extreme.

Playing *XV* so far ahead of launch is something of a mixed blessing. We've seen the future, and it is wonderful, but that's just going to make the wait that much harder. There's still no fixed launch window, but we'd genuinely be surprised if Square managed to pull it all together before the end of the year – this time next year or thereabouts feels much more realistic. We still have loads to do in the *Episode Duscae* demo and the *Heavensward* expansion for *XIV* will see us into Silly Season, at which point *XV* will be mere months away. Well, hopefully...



HAJIME TABATA

DIRECTOR, FINAL FANTASY TYPE-0/XV

What was the thinking behind putting *Type-0* on PS4 rather than Vita?

I get asked this question quite often, so I'll have to think of a different way to answer it! I wanted to do it on home consoles. There are obviously very logical business reasons why it was decided to do that, but then equally important were the personal and creative reasons for us as developers. I really wanted to challenge myself and do a remaster on a much higher level of hardware rather than just try to recreate the portable experience – that would have been very easy on Vita.

Vita is sold as a handheld capable of console-standard games, but do you think that's what players actually want?

It really does depend on the genre and the type of game involved. If you're talking about high-level action games, twitch action games with in-depth fighting, then, in some ways, those kinds of things aren't particularly well-suited to a portable console. The basic information you're processing with your eyes and the size of the screen aren't really optimised for that kind of experience, so it may not be what people want. Even if you had the same game running side-by-side on a small portable console screen and one on a large TV screen, even with the same content, the experience you got from the two would be quite different. Even with a great handheld like the Vita, there's definitely a difference between the types of games that work well on portables and on home console. There has to be a bit of differentiation. That's something that I came to learn after doing *Type-0* – that kind of long form RPG is much more suited to home consoles. You get tired of playing them [on handhelds] and in some ways, it can interfere with the experience.

How would you describe the current state of the RPG genre?

That's a big question! In terms of Western RPGs, it seems almost all are developed for home

consoles. Compared to that, the Japanese RPG is a lot more varied – a lot of them can be played on smartphones, a number that are designed for handhelds and a couple that offer that big TV experience. There's a lot more variation.

You have to look at it as different RPGs for different platforms, see the different models in different ways. You can't just put them all together and say 'These are all RPGs'. Looking at the kind of RPGs I'm developing at the moment and the kind I find most value in – the kind of games I want to make – I want to do the kind of RPG that isn't just a way to waste five minutes here and there, and focus more on deep experiences... *meaningful* RPG experiences where you have a properly

“WITH THE NEW
HARDWARE, YOU CAN
DO ALMOST ANYTHING
YOU WANT TO DO. IN A
WAY, IT'S HARDER”

developed world, one that tells a deep story and when you see it to the end, you have a real emotional attachment. That's the kind of RPG I'm concentrating on. A lot of the Western RPGs you play now are that kind of experience, things like *Skyrim*. It's that kind of side that I'm focusing on.

There seems to be a more concerted effort to target a global rather than domestic audience these days. Is this true in your case?

It's very polarised into two camps. There are a lot of Japanese studios that do aim for a global audience and appeal to a much larger audience than before but on the other hand, there are a lot of Japanese companies and games that really narrow the focus down to just the domestic market and don't even think about their products leaving Japan. There's almost nothing in between, in a way. If you look at numbers and who's going for what kind of audience,

there aren't as many developers in Japan who are aiming for that wide global market – those focusing on the domestic market are maybe in the majority at the moment.

Is there anything in *Type-0* or *XV* that is specifically tailored for global appeal?

First of all, we absolutely don't have the intention of staying only in Japan with *Final Fantasy*. We really are convinced that there are a lot of players around the world who would respond well to and really enjoy the kinds of experiences we're trying to do. *Final Fantasy* is always approached in a very global manner – that's a given. Even now, it's quite difficult to approach a game from the perspective of aiming at the whole world and making everything in a global way. I'm not sure I even understand what that would entail! You have to assume quite a lot.

What different challenges have you faced between *Type-0* and *XV*?

The biggest difference was very much the difference in hardware. With the new generation of hardware, the facilities there mean you can almost do anything you want to do. If we imagine we want to do a game one way, then the hardware could in theory allow that. It becomes a much different process. We need to think about the time we've got, how we spend our resources and what kind of game we really want to make, but there are no factors that mean the game *has* to go a certain way. In a way it's harder, because you don't have anything to hold you back. Compared to that, with development for a lower spec machine like a handheld, you really do have to work within its constraints and adapt and adjust to that. It's a very different approach and a completely different mental process.

How has *XV* changed since being originally announced as *Versus XIII*?

When it was first announced as *Versus XIII*, I wasn't on the project at all, so I can't say a lot about

that period! But since I was brought in and made director on the project, one of the biggest changes is that we've obviously moved on one generation of hardware. The technical base has completely changed, and that does affect how we think about development and how we approach everything. Moving away from the technical side of it, there's been quite a change in the expectations of people towards the *Final Fantasy* series, and in their preconceptions about the games as well. They're quite different now to when it was first announced.

Do you think that has anything to do with the mixed reception to *XIII*?

It's not so much *just* because of *XIII*. It's been more of an ongoing process, really. Each generation of hardware has its own generations of *Final Fantasy* games, and people's expectations of the brand changes based on that. And that's going to change with the PS4 and Xbox One generation as well. It's not just *XIII* – people's expectations for *Final Fantasy* are always changing. There were a lot of people who liked *Final Fantasy XIII*, and they're people who will judge future *Final Fantasy* games based on what they liked in that. But the people who didn't will be judging based on what they like in previous *Final Fantasy* games. The attitude towards the game really does change depending on what players expect and hope for. Every single generation produces different people with different expectations, so it's a delicate thing to deal with.

To what extent will fan feedback to *Episode Duscae* shape the final game?

We very much want to receive feedback based on the demo and we really do see it as an asset. We'll be listening to what people have to say about it. We really want quality feedback, rather than just dealing with a large number of people and getting as many opinions as possible without any backing. We want to talk to people who have actually played the demo and there are certainly things in there that they'll maybe say about the game that we won't have realised.





FFXIV: A REALM REBORN

FFXIV IS COMING UP ON ITS ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY ON PS4, AND PUSHING TWO ON PS3. A LOT HAS CHANGED SINCE THE REBOOTED MMO ARRIVED, AND NEW EXPANSION, HEAVENSWARD, COULD BE THE REASON YOU NEED TO RETURN TO EORZEA OR TO JUMP IN FOR THE FIRST TIME...

We've said it before and we'll say it again – *Final Fantasy XIV* was the most successful failure in Square's history. After being forced to effectively remake the game on account of how bad the original version turned out, *A Realm Reborn* wound up as hands down the best MMO on console and one of the best on the market in general. Square might still be using a relatively old-fashioned subscription business model, but it's not been stingy with new content – every single patch has added *something*, with the more feature-packed updates measured in gigabytes and loaded with new stuff for all subscribers (or even free month trial-ers, in many cases) to try. Square sort of made a rod for its own back with this generosity, mind, and it has had to pull out all the stops to make sure the first full paid expansion, due in June, seem like value for money. Short version: it is. Bungie, if you're reading this, put

“NEWCOMERS WILL HAVE NO TROUBLE FINDING GROUPS TO RUN WITH”

the magazine down and go make some more damn Strikes – *this* is how you do an expansion.

First up, you'll have a whole new area to explore in the form of Ishgard, and access to flying mounts with which to do it. The latter could be game-changing if you can fly over some of the more complex areas and tougher enemies in the rest of the world, as there's little more



Those who get addicted to things easily, beware: *FFXIV* is truly dangerous once it gets its hooks in.

annoying than running into a cliff face when you think you're going the right way, or having to follow the one path out of an area. In addition to this, you're going to see the level cap raised by ten across the board (making 60 the maximum and naturally boosting character stats substantially) as well as a new playable race and three new Jobs: Machinist is a gun-toting DPS machine, Dark Knight is the badass new tank while Astrologian is a support-heavy healing class that focuses on mitigating damage and buffing the team.

It's that last part that means this will be the perfect time to start a character or to hop back in and start levelling other Jobs.

Veterans are going to want to try these new tools out and that means low-level areas and early dungeons will be as busy as they were when the Rogue/Ninja class came in, meaning newcomers will have no trouble finding groups to run with, and experienced ones at that. It's going to be interesting to see how the new roles change and what high-level groups are going to be looking for, but the option to try another version of each of the game's primary roles is certainly welcome – patches have managed to more or less balance out usefulness of existing Jobs, so even any day one mishaps in this regard won't be present for long.

The Gold Saucer was enough to drag us back in, and this expansion should do the same for many a lapsed player or newcomer – fire up your free month, see how you get on with a *Final Fantasy* MMO. Hopefully, we'll see you in the Duty Finder.

VISIT THE MANDERVILLE GOLD SAUCER!

The 2.51 patch brought with it the life-ruining addition of the Gold Saucer, FFVII's famous casino-type resort. Here are a few good reasons to log back in and check it out

THE MUSIC

FFVII fans will lose their shit when they first arrive in the new Gold Saucer – the new arrangement of the classic music is absolutely awesome. Given the grindy nature of both the mini-games and Triple Triad, its going to loop quite a lot. And you won't be able to hear anything else for weeks, especially since the infectious Triple Triad tune is back as well. No one piece of music terrifies us more than that.

TRIPLE TRIAD

If you love *Final Fantasy VIII* as much as we do, you'll already be able to hear the music. That wonderful, horrible, everything-is-on-hold-forever music that accompanied VIII's card game. It's back, and we're scared – this MModified version is a bit more of a grind than the original but it's still fun as hell to play. NPCs around the world can be challenged, as can your fellow players. Expect to lose quite a lot.

CHOCOBO RACING

You could already train and raise your companion chocobo pre-patch, but now you're also able to own, train, race, and breed your own track chocobo. Racing is simple yet entertaining, but it's the raising side that intrigues us – stats can be improved, abilities learned and victories chalked up, then it all begins again when you choose a breeding partner for your mount after its racing days are over.

CACTPOT

Everyone dreams of a big lottery win, and this is your chance to get exactly that. Draws come in two flavours, one daily scratchcard-esque affair that actually has a degree of logic and skill to it but modest prize pots and the main event, a weekly lottery where you select any four-digit number and get paid according to what you match up at the weekend. It could be you... only it won't. Ever. Obviously.

MINI-GAMES

The Gold Saucer plays host to a number of arcade-style machines that offer simple distractions for minimal gain, but it's still a nice way to kick back after a dungeon too many. Nobody ever got rich through basketball sideshow stalls, so in many ways, Square's actually bang on the money with this. If you're a few tickets short of a prize or just want to kill some time, these are pretty much perfect.

GATES

Similar to the main game's FATE public events, each GATE activity sends the entire casino to a frenzy as visitors rush for the target and partake in whatever madness is occurring. Some are skill-based, others blind luck but most are worth doing at least once. You'll come to learn what the more lucrative ones are with time, anyway, and chat will almost always erupt with confused cries for help.



FINAL FANTASY VII

FORMAT: PS4 ETA: Q2 2015

What seemed like a potential highlight of the PlayStation Experience conference back in December quickly dissolved into disappointment as we figured out we weren't getting the *FFVII* remake we've always wanted, but a simple port of the PC version. It's still a great game, and it was never likely that Square would invest in a full HD remake of such an expansive adventure, so we'll still be delighted to head back to Midgar on PS4 as soon as this lands on the Store. Even if we wanted to stay away, we couldn't – the lure of a Platinum Trophy at the end of one of our favourite games is too strong.

With modern Japanese RPGs usually experimenting with new mechanics that deviate from traditional turn-based combat, it's actually refreshing to return to the classic template. The Materia system remains one of the greatest systems in the history of the genre too, offering both simplicity for newcomers and complexity for experts. It's crazy to think that we're at a point where players may have visited the Gold Saucer in *XIV* before they even see the original one...



FINAL FANTASY X/X-2 HD REMASTER

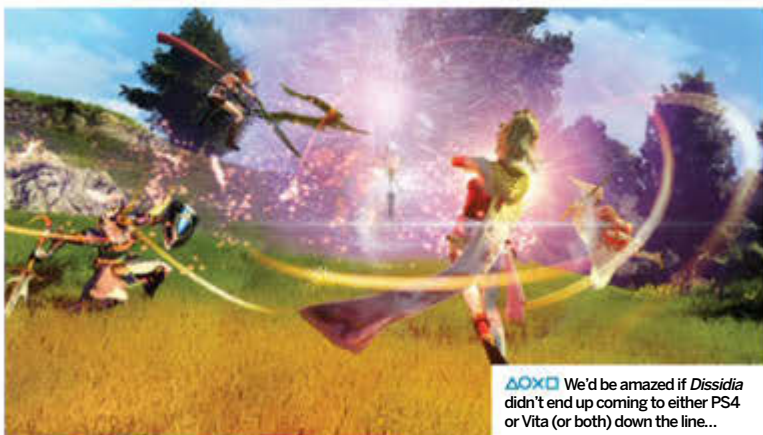
FORMAT: PS4 ETA: Q2 2015

The option to play the best possible version of a classic game is clearly a welcome one, but we're not entirely sure why this version of the solid remaster that came out on PS3 and Vita not long ago is only just coming to PS4 now. Still, if you didn't bite already, Square just made it even more tempting. Sure, some aspects of *X* have aged poorly but it still holds up well mechanically, even if the linear structure does make us wonder why fans who adore *FFX* took such offence to *XIII*'s similarly funnelled progression. In response to all the bitching about the reworked soundtrack, Square will also offer PS4 players the opportunity to switch between the remastered score and the classic one.

X-2 isn't as offensive as we remember either, with some of the new sections and elements that featured in the misleadingly-titled Japan-only *International* edition adding considerable depth and variety. It's still not going to be to everyone's tastes, of course, but look at it this way – you're paying for *X* and getting *X-2* free so even if you never play it, you still get to enjoy the best version of one of the most popular games in the series.



△×□ Still didn't remaster that god-awful laughing scene though did you, Square? DID YOU?



△××△ We'd be amazed if *Dissidia* didn't end up coming to either PS4 or Vita (or both) down the line...

DISSIDIA FINAL FANTASY

FORMAT: ARCADE ETA: Q3 2015

While the arcade scene might be pretty much dead outside of Japan, the game halls out there are still attracting all the big names and usually, a console port follows. This all-star fighter brings together the heroes of each mainline *Final Fantasy* game just as the PSP fighters *Dissidia* and *Duodecim* did, this time with the twist that battles are three-on-three affairs. It looks fantastic and is the kind of thing that would be perfectly suited to a digital PS4 release – put it out as a multiplayer-only team combat title for the right price, and it'd likely be huge. Or, go to town on the solo stuff and it'll work just as well as a full-price retail game. Long story short, we want this on PS4. Is that so much to ask?

△××△ *Mevius* is one of the best looking mobile games we've ever seen. Might need to get a new phone.



MEVIUS FINAL FANTASY

FORMAT: MOBILE ETA: Q2 2015

With top-end mobiles catching up to and exceeding the best handhelds in terms of power, it's no surprise that Square is looking to take advantage of this with a new RPG that looks like its home console counterparts. While the action will be pared back a little compared to the complexity of the full fat games, and control will be simplified to facilitate a touch screen interface without too much clutter, it's still looking great and it'll be winging its way to handsets in Japan any day. There's no word on a localisation yet, mind, and while we'd love to get our hands on it, it's worth bearing in mind that many mobile *FF* spin-offs before *Mevius* haven't left Japan. Still, it'll run on an old Nokia 3130, right? Wicked.



FF: RECORD KEEPER

FORMAT: MOBILE ETA: Q2 2015

A free-to-play mobile RPG that's been doing well in Japan, *Record Keeper* takes pretty much every famous face from the franchise, shrinks them down into cute SNES-style 16-bit versions of themselves and lets them band together in order to defeat the forces of darkness. While only confirmed for iOS and Android at the moment, a Vita port is not out of the realms of possibility, especially given the series' strong ties to the PlayStation brand. While we fear it's going to take the piss a little with the monetisation side of things, it's a simple and somewhat sad truth that we, along with many others, probably would pull out our wallets if it meant we could recruit pixelated versions of Balthier and Cait Sith.



FINAL FANTASY PORTAL

FORMAT: MOBILE ETA: Q2 2015

A companion app for all things *Final Fantasy*, *Portal* offers all kinds of info from databanks to store links. But none of that matters, because it also lets you play a version of the *FFVIII* card game Triple Triad, featuring cards based on loads of legacy *FF* characters. That alone is going to make this *incredibly* dangerous to install, and the game can easily rob you of hours as you search for the best cards. There'll even be connectivity between this version of Triple Triad and the one that has found its way into *A Realm Reborn*, meaning MMO players have an excuse for burning weeks on a simple, yet addictive, card game.



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT METAL GEAR SOLID V THE PHANTOM PAIN

We infiltrate Kojima Productions' top-secret project and break down all the key details on the biggest Metal Gear Solid game yet

1 WE FINALLY HAVE A RELEASE DATE

After months, nay *years*, of impatient waiting and reading way too much into everything Kojima has said and done in search of answers, we finally have what we wanted all along – a launch date for *The Phantom Pain*. Tuesday 1 September is the magical day that we'll get to enjoy the beginning of the end for Big Boss, so book the week off now in preparation. Given that pretty much every other major game of the generation so far has suffered a delay of some kind, we *really* hope Kojima manages to buck that trend.

3 METAL GEAR ONLINE IS BACK

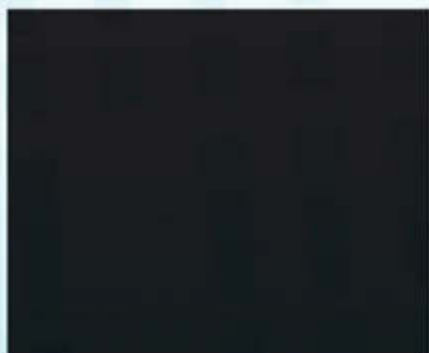
The multiplayer component for *MGS V* looks bloody brilliant. Not least because of the range of gadgets on show in the team-based mode we've seen, including cloaking devices, Fulton traps, fluffy dog toys that can freeze anyone one that sees it in some kind of cute trance, and a bipedal armored vehicle with a machine gun. The original *Metal Gear Online* had something of a cult following, but with a dedicated team developing this version, we suspect we're going to get a more intricate multiplayer suite.

2 WE'RE GOING AROUND THE WORLD

MGS 4 was the first in the series to take us on a globe-trotting adventure, rather than sticking to one location, and it seems that *The Phantom Pain* will follow that template. Afghanistan and Africa are the only locations that are confirmed to make an appearance, but the Cuban island used as the setting for *Ground Zeroes* could feature again. Then there is the hospital we saw in the first reveal of *The Phantom Pain*, which looks to be somewhere else entirely – it's apparently based on a real facility in Cyprus.

4 YOU CAN KIDNAP SHEEP

The Fulton recovery system from *Peace Walker* returns in *The Phantom Pain*. For those of you who don't know what that means, it's a big balloon that you attach to things, which are then carried back to your base. Anything from soldiers to sheep can be sent to Mother Base and those resources are used as you research new technologies. Whether you're someone who likes the idea of base building, or someone who likes the idea of seeing a sheep attached to a balloon, there's something for everyone.



5 YOU'LL GET INTO R&D

Developing your base will allow you to invest in new technology that can assist you when you're out in the thick of it. You can, for example, improve your intel capabilities so that enemy soldiers will be tagged on your map. You could also make a call to Mother Base to request an ammo supply drop or, more spectacularly, an airstrike...

6 YOU CAN BE INVADED

Those aforementioned base building mechanics aren't just helping you in single player. Some of the technology that you research will be employed in a defensive rather than offensive capacity, the reason being that other players can invade your base. You'll want UAVs for an early warning; cameras; laser tripwires; anything that might trip a potential invader up. This does of course mean that you can also invade your friend's bases to steal their precious resources.

7 IT WON'T BE QUIET

Kojima Productions has revealed that there are a companion characters that you meet who can then be called upon to aid you. One such character is Quiet, a sniper with the ability to turn invisible and move at superhuman speed. She can be called upon to spot enemies in order to aid infiltrations, lend supporting fire as she moves between sniper spots, or even to shoot a grenade that you throw to send it hurtling towards a target.

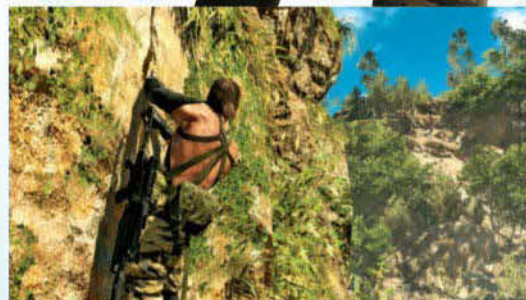
8 YOU CAN GET YOUR OWN WOLF

Alongside Quiet, the only other companion character revealed so far is D.D., a wolfhound that can be found as a one-eyed puppy. If you come across said puppy, you can send him back to Mother Base where he will grow into a eye-patch wearing wolf that can accompany you on missions. We're tempted to leave D.D. at home, though, because Kojima Productions has revealed that if he is killed, he is permanently dead. We can't bear the thought of that happening to our new four-legged friend.

AOXQ Quiet's been handcuffed by someone. As she's on Mother Base, we suspect it's Snake. What convinces him to let her free?



AOXQ That bit of debris sticking out of Snake's head clearly has demonic connotations. Symbolism, y'all.



AOXQ Now you try telling us that's not the most badass wolf ever. You can't, because it clearly is. Its got a ruddy eye patch!

9 YOU'LL SEE BIG BOSS FLY OFF THE HANDLE

Metal Gear history tells us that Big Boss is going to become a 'bad guy'. We've yet to see his transition from hero to villain, though. Everything points to *The Phantom Pain* being the game that tells the story of how Big Boss' quest for revenge twists the man and his motives. Or perhaps, we'll gain a new perspective on the man that's being called 'Venom Snake' in this iteration of the story.

10 WHAT BIG BOSS SAW IN THE HOSPITAL

In the reveal for *The Phantom Pain*, we saw Big Boss waking from his coma and crawling through a hospital that seemed to be under attack, he appeared to see a number of figures from *Metal Gear* history. That included a fiery figure that looked like Volgin, the antagonist from *MGS 3* and a figure that was reminiscent of Psycho Mantis. Were these visions? Conflation of reality and fantasy? Or the real deal? We can't wait to find out.

11 YOU'VE GOT TO MIX IT UP

One of the coolest features of *The Phantom Pain* is the way that the game will adapt to the way you play. Overzealous use of headshots, for example, means that on returning to an area, you'll find the guards kitted out with metal helmets to neutralise that tactic. Having the game force you to adapt your strategy and use a wide range of techniques is pretty cool in our book.

12 YOU'VE GOT YOUR OWN HORSE

Taking a leaf from his mentor's book, Big Boss starts using a horse in *MGS V*. Not only does it help you travel, it can also help you deal with enemies. You can, for example, hang off its side and use it to block soldier's line of sight as the apparently riderless horse trots by. You can also have it crap in the road, its frictionless feces sending enemy vehicles into a spin should they drive over it.

13 WATCH OUT FOR SKULL FACE

Not only did he brutally torture Paz and Chico in *MGS: Ground Zeroes*, as leader, or at least a key member of XOF, Skull Face bears responsibility for the attack on Mother Base that decimated Big Boss' army and left him in a coma, leading to the events of *The Phantom Pain*. We'd imagine that tracking down and confronting Skull Face will therefore be a large part of *The Phantom Pain*.

14 MILLER NEEDS SAVING

We don't know a lot about *MGS V*'s story, but one thing we can be sure of is that you will have to save Big Boss' long time ally, Kazuhira Miller, after he is kidnapped in Afghanistan by Soviet forces. Unfortunately for poor Miller, we know that he will be coming back minus an arm and a leg. With Snake also missing an arm upon waking from his coma, there are going to be plenty of prosthetics in this game.

15 LIQUID SNAKE COULD BE IN IT

We know that Big Boss is going to come into contact with a boy named Eli. All we know so far is that he will attack you, though we imagine he's someone that Big Boss is likely to take under his wing in the long run. Interestingly, the writing on the back of Eli's jacket includes the phrase 'Liquid Man'. That fact, along with his appearance and age, means that Eli could very well be a young Liquid Snake.

16 HUEY IS GETTING TORTURED

If you needed any evidence that *The Phantom Pain*'s got a rather dark tone, how about the fact that Big Boss is apparently not above torture? Huey Emmerich – father of Otacon – is suspected of being a Cipher spy implicated in the attack on Mother Base. Big Boss and Ocelot torture him in a bid to find out precisely what went down and whether he was involved.



△×□ The scars are cool, the eye patch is cool, but debris in head is going a bit too far.



"TRACKING DOWN AND CONFRONTING SKULL FACE WILL PLAY A BIG PART IN MGS"

PREPARE FOR PAIN

Four games to get you ready for MGS V

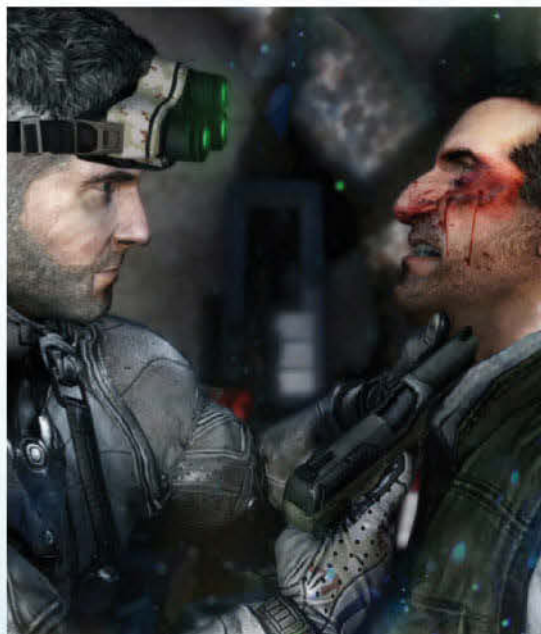


△×□ Reason *MGS V* is great #152: Floating horse attached to a balloon.



DISHONORED

With *MGS V* being more open-ended, you're going to need to experiment with different techniques. *Dishonored*, is a stealth game that gives you a variety of tools to play with. That game is great at encouraging you to think about how to use your abilities in creative ways, and that's the mindset we want to be in for *MGS V*.



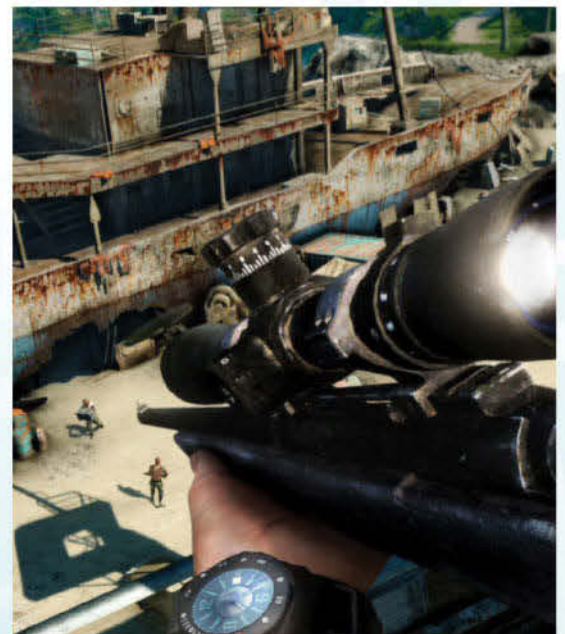
SPLINTER CELL: BLACKLIST

Let's start with the obvious: *Splinter Cell* is a stealth series, and *MGS* is a stealth series. You don't need us to explain why that makes it good preparation. However, *Splinter Cell* has also gradually improved its standing as an action game over the years, as has *MGS*. Use it to get that transition between stealth and action locked down.



MGS: PEACE WALKER

We single out this entry in the *MGS* series for a couple of reasons. The first of those is that its structure and even some of its mechanics mark it as something of a prototype for *The Phantom Pain*. As the game's narrative leads into the events of *MGS V*, it's also an important part of Big Boss' story.

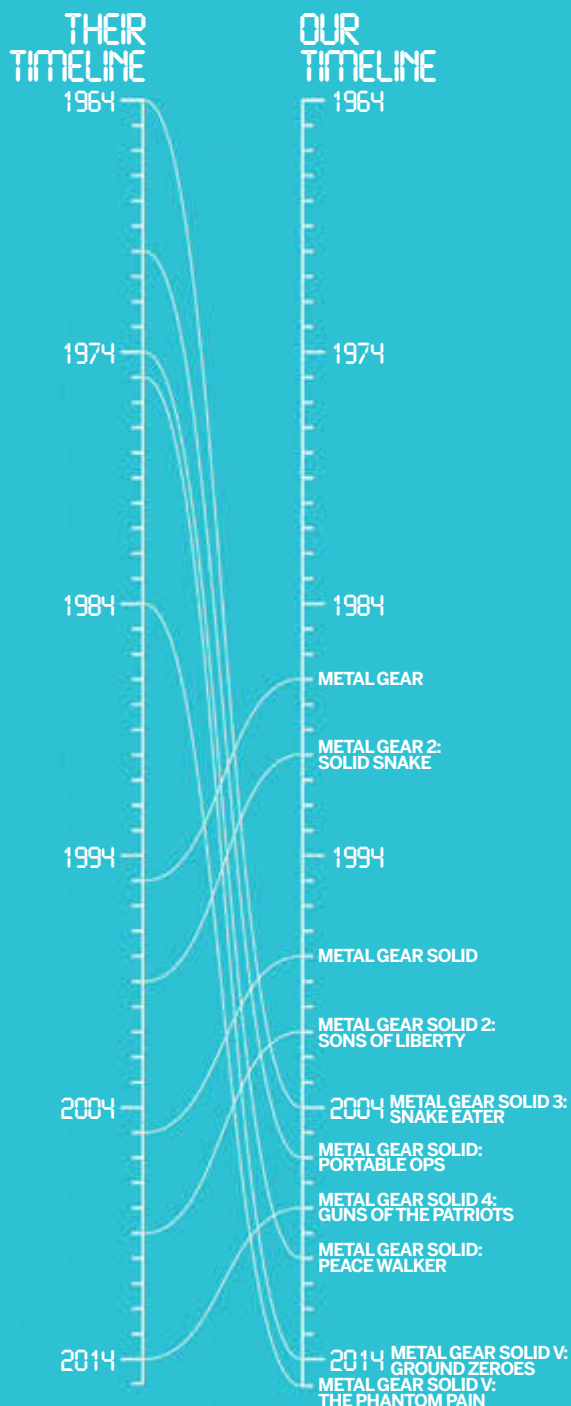


FAR CRY 3

Preparation is key in *Far Cry 3*. Before taking down an outpost, you can carefully scout the area from its outskirts, tagging enemy soldiers so that you can follow their patrols. *MGS V* adds that ability to Snake's arsenal, meaning getting used to the process of planning and executing will be worthwhile.

METAL GEAR BY NUMBERS

Doing some data crunching on the legendary series



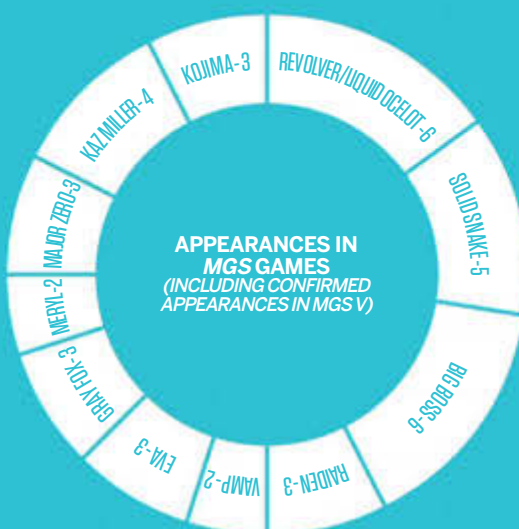
27



The Phantom Pain will be 27th Metal Gear game released in 28 years.

90%

The average Play review score for the four mainline MGS games.



39,000,000

Total number of Metal Gear games sold.

When we find out who took your eye, D.D., they are going to pay BIG TIME.

17 YOU'RE LIKE JAMES BOND

Both Big Boss and Solid Snake have always been fond of their gadgets. You won't be surprised, then, to hear that there are going to be plenty of new ones for you to play with in *The Phantom Pain*. One of our favourites has to be the inflatable decoy that you can use to distract enemies. More unconventionally, you can also inflate it under an enemy standing at a cliff edge to send them hurtling into the abyss. Snake's new arm is also notable in that it can stun people.

18 CARDBOARD BOXES ARE BACK

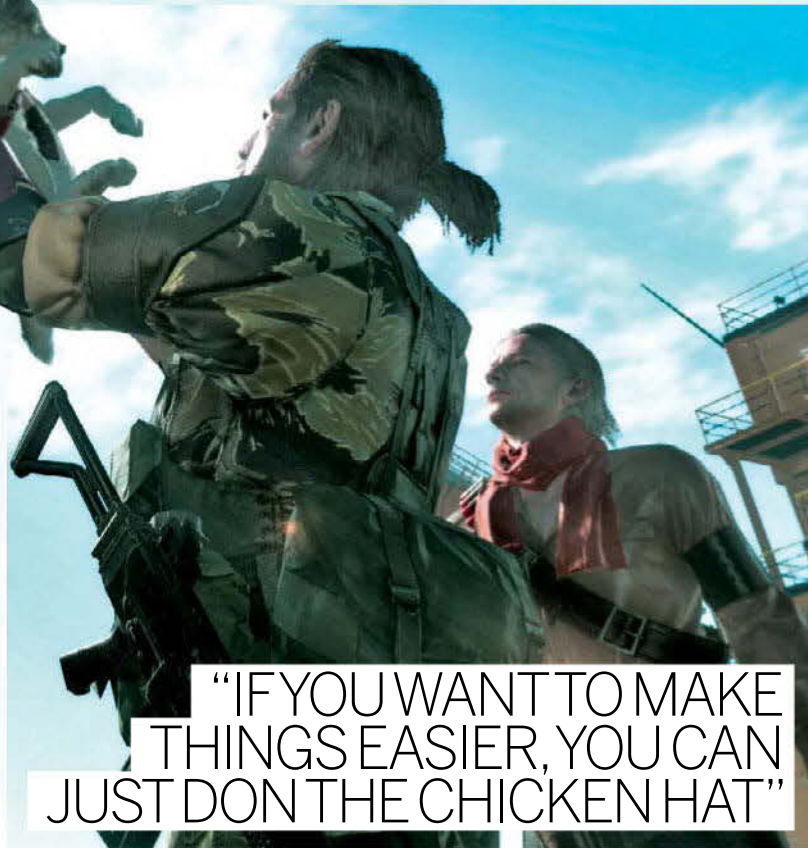
MGS has long had a penchant for mixing the most stony faced, serious story beats with the ridiculous and nonsensical. Its love of creeping around in cardboard boxes is an example of the latter and that'll be included in *MGS V*. You can now get boxes with designs on the outside that can trick your enemies – an enemy commander design, for example, will have your enemies standing to attention and saluting the cardboard impostor.

19 YOU'VE GOT A TIME-TWISTING CIGAR

The Phantom Pain has a day/night cycle that's significant because you may want to infiltrate a base using the cover of darkness, or tackle it during the day, when it may have less guards posted to look after it. In order to change the time of day and experiment with those different options, you can get out your Phantom Cigar for Big Boss to suck on as time passes quickly around him.



△×□ Awww, how cute. Snake's got his soft side as well. We know that puppy is melting his heart.



"IF YOU WANT TO MAKE THINGS EASIER, YOU CAN JUST DON THE CHICKEN HAT"

20 YOU COULD GET SOME FREE STUFF

Have you played *Ground Zeroes*, the prequel to *The Phantom Pain*? If you have, then you will be rewarded when it comes to playing *MGS V*. Though Kojima hasn't said what you will get, those that have a *Ground Zeroes* save file will see some benefit when they play *The Phantom Pain*. Perhaps it's worth making sure you save those prisoners.

△×□ As if the horn wasn't enough, Snake has gone off the rails in terms of accessories.

22 SNAKE IS 'ARMLESS

The term 'Phantom Pain' – a phenomenon in which amputees still feel pain in limbs that they've lost – refers at least in part to the fact that Snake awakes from his coma minus an arm. The arm Snake gets in the wake of that is more than a replacement – it can be upgraded with new technology, giving Snake the ability to electrocute his foes.

23 YOU GOT SOME NEW SKILLS

Ground Zeroes introduced us to a more mobile Snake with a few new tricks up his sleeve. We now know that he's going to have another new ability too. Snake has the ability to climb, scaling cliff edges in gameplay footage. We've seen little verticality in *MGS* games, so that addition is interesting in the way that it offers potential for opening up level design.

24 OCELOT IS YOUR BUDDY

Ocelot is the only character to appear in every *MGS* game and he continues that streak in *The Phantom Pain*. The last time Big Boss saw him was in *MGS 3* where the two were at odds. How they ended up working together should be explained in *MGS V*. Don't assume they're *really* working together, however. That crafty Ocelot is always up to something.

21 HAYTER'S GONNA HATE

Sorry David Hayter fans, the gruff voice that's become synonymous with Snake is changing, as those of you who played *Ground Zeroes* will know. Kiefer Sutherland is the man taking the lead role this time round. Though some fans aren't happy with this, we think he did a pretty good job in *Ground Zeroes*, so we're not too upset about the change.

25 THERE IS A CHICKEN HAT

Are you a bit rubbish at *MGS*? Fear not, Kojima has got your back. If you want to make things a bit easier you can don the chicken hat. Sure, it's a bit humiliating, but it will make it more difficult for enemies to spot you, giving you a bit of a leg up. Granted, it's not as discrete as the EZ Gun but to be honest, we'll take the chicken hat for added hilarity.

INDIEVELOPMENT

Our indie expert Paul Walker-Emig delves into the exciting, strange and intriguing world of indie development to pick out the best of what's coming to PlayStation



YOU LOOK BACK on some of the original PlayStation's harsh, blocky graphics and you wonder how we ever thought those games looked good. Polygons can be beautiful, though, and **AER** is a game that proves it. Its stylised triangular edges coalesce to create a bright, vivid world, composed of lush floating islands, suspended in the sky. You explore these disparate islands as Auk, a pilgrim girl with a unique gift – she can turn into a bird, allowing her to explore her homeland in flight and find remote locations. A large part of *AER* is about exploration then, about the wonderful freedom of soaring through the air as you discover new areas in this vibrant landscape. What exactly it is that you're looking for, we don't yet know. What we do know is that there are some dangerous forces at work and creatures that will be trying to harm you. Does that mean there will be combat? Developer Forgotten Key hasn't made that clear, but we're betting *AER* will be more about evasion than confrontation. Regardless, we look forward to getting our hands

△××□ Getting the feel of gliding through the sky right will be vital to *AER*'s success.

△××□ If this picture tells us anything about *AER*'s story, it's that triangles are important.



on *AER* when it comes to PS4 to find out, because the game looks delightful. The only downside is that we'll have to wait until 2016 to play it.

A game that we won't have to wait too long for is the intriguing **REFLECTIONS**, coming to PS4 in the next few months. We're used to games telling us that they are all about choice and consequence, but *Reflections* looks to be a game that will show the likes of *The Walking Dead* up when it comes to giving control of a game's narrative to the player. Broken Window Studios says that the game's engine responds to every action you take, even if it's something as insignificant as using an item, and adapts the narrative accordingly. Time will pass as you play too, meaning that

how you spend it matters. The idea is that this story about moving away from home and starting your life as an adult is shaped by your actions, rather than being defined by options that you pick from a menu. The concept is a fascinating one – the kind of innovative approach that makes us love indie games – and if it plays out with the level of flexibility that the developer is suggesting it will, it's going to be an incredibly interesting adventure game.

As much as we love narrative focused experimental indie games like *Reflections*, we also like games that are about running around really fast, blowing stuff up and carrying out the orders of an anthropomorphic rabbit from the future named Bunnylord. We



DEV DIARY

Red Hook is developing *Darkest Dungeon*, a 2D RPG coming to PS4

"Over the past couple weeks since early access launch, we've worked diligently to get our bug count down – fixing the most critical crash-bugs and exploits, and working down the list to a few quality of life improvements. The most notable of which was the addition of a counter and turn indicator.

We settled on adding a HUD element that indicated who was left to act in each round. This preserved a good amount of mystery and tension, while allowing players to quickly take stock of which enemies were still on deck to attack. We're happy with the solution, and are very excited to continue this policy of refinement and improvement across the whole game!"

are talking about the incredible looking **NOT A HERO**. Developed by Roll7, the studio behind *OlliOlli*, the game is a 2D shooter with a breakneck pace that makes it look a bit like *Hotline Miami* on a horizontal plane. There are nine different characters in the game, each with their own weapons and gameplay style, which should provide a nice bit of variety. If sliding and rolling between cover while popping off shots in *Not A Hero* is as exhilarating as it looks, then we are going to be in for a real treat when the game hits PS4 and Vita this year.

SOUL AXIOM may not have a rabbit named Bunnylord, but it's surreal in its own way. Early in the game, you find yourself exploring environments that look like dreamscapes ripped from an android's mind with no explanation as to why you're there. *Soul Axiom* gradually sets up an intriguing mystery, skillfully teasing you with tidbits of information and opaque symbolism. Unraveling the story of who you are and how you ended



ΔOXΔ *Not A Hero* is looking bright, brash and spectacularly stupid.

"SOUL AXIOM MAY NOT HAVE A RABBIT NAMED BUNNYLORD, BUT IT'S SURREAL IN ITS OWN WAY"

ΔOXΔ The cyberpunk inspirations are there for all to see in *Soul Axiom*'s glowing sci-fi landscape.



up where you are involves you solving puzzles using a variety of environmental manipulation abilities that are unlocked as you progress. You are able to bring certain pieces of matter into and out of being, or animate in the environment, to give a couple of examples. In the latter stages of our hands-on time with the game, we became concerned that it lacks a bit of signposting, but we have been playing an early access version, so there's plenty of time for changes before the game comes to PS4. We're optimistic, because with a couple of tweaks here and there, *Soul Axiom* could be a great puzzle adventure game.



FUNDED DRIFT STAGE

PLATFORMS: PS4, Vita
ETA: 2016



With its neon color palette, cheesy soundtrack and chunky visuals, it's no surprise to discover that *Drift Stage* pays homage to a genre born in the Eighties. The game is a modern take on classic arcade racers like *OutRun 2*, *Ridge Racer* and *Daytona USA*, but with more drifting. Racing around the track in the demo, set against landscapes that pop with colour, is loads of fun, so bring on the full game.

WISHLIST RETURN OF THE OBRA DINN



We love the concept of this game. You find yourself aboard a ship that comes into port minus its crew. You can rewind time in order to witness some of the crew's final moments, and you must discover what happened using that information. The game is being developed by Lucas Pope, the man behind *Papers, Please* – which is, incidentally, coming to Vita. We've hope that *Return Of The Obra Dinn* follows the same trajectory – i.e. it will be brilliant and come to PlayStation.

IF YOU LOVE... STREET FIGHTER IV



Do you enjoy competitive one-on-one fighters? We highly recommend you check out fence-'em-up *Nidhogg* for a different spin on the genre.



"YOU WILL NEVER BE AT A LOSS WHEN IT COMES TO THAT QUINTESSENTIAL JUST CAUSE COMPULSION TO MAKE THINGS EXPLODE"

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



It's built for creating moments that make the PS4's share functionality great.



You will have a gigantic 400 square mile sandbox to destroy as you see fit.



Your parachute, wingsuit and tethering abilities add a real element of verticality.



There will be a large variety of weapons and vehicles for you to play around with.



ETA Q4 2015

DEV AVALANCHE STUDIOS

PUB SQUARE ENIX

TWITTER @JUSTCAUSE

Just Cause 3

And then everything exploded forever

PS4

NONE OF US are under any illusions about what *Just Cause* is and that includes the game's developers. They know that it is ridiculous, silly and over-the-top. They know that people don't come to *Just Cause* for an engrossing, meditative story, or reflective thematics. They come to it to attach a sports car to a jet plane, to blow stuff up with C4 and to fly about in a wingsuit. That's precisely why Avalanche Studios says that it is maintaining its focus on giving players a sandbox to mess about in, and thus, providing them with a variety of systems that they can combine to create spectacular and explosive moments. Yes, there will be a story, but Avalanche says that the it is going to strike the right tone, reflecting the ostentatious, B-movie feel of the action that you'll be partaking in. In any case, story is not the priority for *Just Cause 3*. The priority is to ensure it lets players loose and lets them get on with playing.

The fact that Avalanche is focusing its energy on the things that made the series appealing in the first place is good news for *Just Cause 3*, because the studio is making the right noises about dialling up its best mechanics and removing barriers

to fun. For one, there is the famous tethering mechanic that lets you connect vehicles, buildings, enemies, explosive barrels and whatever else you fancy. Where as before you could only have one tether active, *Just Cause 3* is now allowing you to have up to three active tethers (though the studio has indicated that it is considering the possibility of four or five). The idea is to further foster that creativity that makes sandbox games so enjoyable, to open up the potential of the kinds of chaos you can create by tethering objects, vehicles and enemies together in different combinations.

Then there's C4. Avalanche is well aware that people spend a lot of time using C4 to blow stuff up in *Just Cause* games. In the series' previous entry, you had to actively search for C4 when you ran out. Why, the logic goes, make players have to jump through that hoop if blowing stuff up is something they enjoy? In *Just Cause 3*, you will always have C4, meaning you will never be at a loss when it comes to that quintessential *Just Cause* compulsion to make things explode. It will be balanced, in some fashion, probably by only allowing you to have so much C4 planted at once, but still, the thinking is sound. Making people search for C4 was making it difficult to for them to do what they want, so *Just Cause 3* does away with that.

The same goes for vehicle spawning. You could spawn vehicles in *Just Cause 2*, but you had to pay significant amounts of in-game cash to get them. If you wanted to play around with some cars and 'copters, tethering them, crashing them, or whatever else you fancied, you might find your fun interrupted by running out of cash. *Just Cause 3* is removing that barrier, making it far easier and quicker to get what you want. Again, there will be some kind of alternative balancing, but *Just Cause 3* is trying to remove the barriers in the name of fun, allowing players to do what they want in the game.

It's great to see that Avalanche hasn't lost sight of what it is that won the *Just Cause* series its fans, because it's that sense of fun, that desire to let us 'play' in the traditional sense, that makes it stand out. Plenty of our favourite games take a serious tone and deal with weighty subjects, but sometimes it's nice to play a game that gives you the tools to piss about and have a laugh. The indications are that *Just Cause 3* will be the game to scratch that itch when it hits PS4 at the end of this year.

Paul Walker-Ernig

JUST CAUSE 3 is being tethered together and attached onto a jet plane at Avalanche Studios. Check the website for more details: justcause.com

AOXO The game is looking like a real step up from a visual standpoint. That's the PS4 for you.

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Persona 5

Stealing our hearts

ALSO COMING
TO PS3

AS IF WE weren't excited enough about *Persona 5*, Atlus has only gone and made it look like the most stylish JRPG ever. That all starts with the cinematic anime cutscenes made by Production I.G – the studio behind the *Ghost In The Shell* films and the animated sequence you may remember from Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* – which are, quite simply, stunning. Given the *Persona* series' strength when it comes to art direction, it's no surprise to see that sense of style carry over to every other aspect of the game. Whether we see our protagonist walking through a train station, exploring a dungeon or engaging in turn-based combat, the game looks incredible. That's in no small part due to the fact that Atlus is careful to ensure that it ties everything in the *Persona* games to a specific theme and representative colour, lending them a visual consistency that makes them an aesthetic delight.

As pleased as we are to see Atlus bring that trademark *Persona* panache to the fifth entry in the series, what is more intriguing to us is that there are hints that *Persona 5* will shake up what has unquestionably been the weakest element of the game: dungeon crawling. For a start, those boring and repetitive corridors look as if they will be replaced with environments that are more intricate and interesting to explore. Even more enticing is the potential introduction of some new mechanics. We've seen *Persona 5*'s protagonist making lightning-fast dashes between cover while exploring a dungeon with an oblivious enemy in the background. There's a suggestion, then, that there is at least one kind of stealth-like mechanic to allow you to avoid, or perhaps get the drop on, enemies.

If there's another obvious area in which *Persona 5* is changing things up, it has to be the way it treats its main characters. Where *Persona*'s characters have traditionally been placed unequivocally on the side of good, it seems there are shades of grey in this game. In opposition to being a unassuming new student transferred to a Tokyo high school, the game's protagonist has an alternate and more exciting identity – that of a phantom, mask-wearing thief (it's no coincidence that his Persona is named Arsène, a reference to the fictional French thief, Arsène Lupin). At least



part of the game, then, will involve undertaking heists planned with the three other characters we've had a look at – two fellow students and a talking cat, who we assume will be the equivalent to *Persona 4*'s Teddie. This propensity for law-breaking is related to the themes the game tackles, with the game's director, Katsura Hashino, talking about how the game reflects the fact that many people feel like they don't know where their place is in the world and that challenging the status quo can sometimes be the only response to that.

Though challenging the status quo is what *Persona 5* itself seems to be doing in some ways, it's clear that a number of traditional *Persona* elements also remain. Each day will be segmented into morning, afternoon and evening, with the choice being placed in your hands as to how you spend that time. Social Links will return, meaning that you can choose to socialise with different characters that you meet in order to improve your relationships with them and, by extension,

your abilities in battle. We'd also speculate that the ability to take on jobs to earn cash, study to improve your stats or visit dungeons to level up your Personas will return. In any case, *Persona*'s calendar mechanic has proved to be a great way of pacing the game, so we're pleased to see it return.

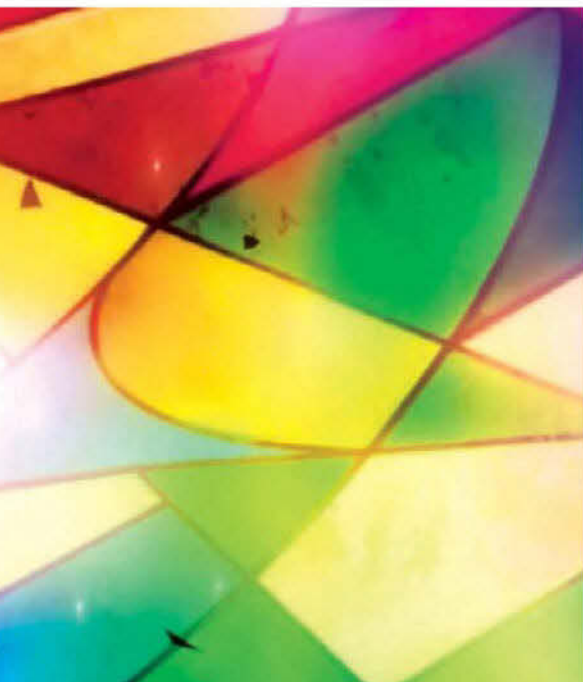
Persona 5's apparent intent to reflect on the angst of living in the modern world via the perspective of some masked thieves/ high school students suggests to us that the game will maintain the bizarre oscillating tone and unique mix of gameplay styles that made its predecessor so enjoyable. If we get that eclectic mix of social simulation and JRPG combat, along with a commitment to rethink some of the series' less compelling elements, we will be very happy indeed.

Paul Walker-Emig

Put on your magic glasses and you'll see that **PERSONA 5** is being developed by Atlus. Check the website for more details: atlus.com/persona5



△×□ We're guessing this rather ominous image has something to do with whatever dark secrets our protagonist has.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ It takes *Persona* to the heart of the thriving city of Tokyo – Shibuya to be precise.
- The main story dungeons are now designed, rather than randomly generated.
- × Each character has two weapons, a melee weapon and a gun for long-range attacks.
- Unlike past *Persona* games, the protagonist has some issues of his own to confront.

MENTAL BREAKDOWN

Persona 4 Golden gave you the option to sit in on lessons explaining the psychology of Carl Jung, on which the game's fiction is based. If you've missed that, let us give you a crash course



PERSONA

In Jungian psychology, the Persona is a mask that we use in order to interact with the social community. In the *Persona* games, that concept is given a twist, the Persona being the avatar that gives each character their power in battle.



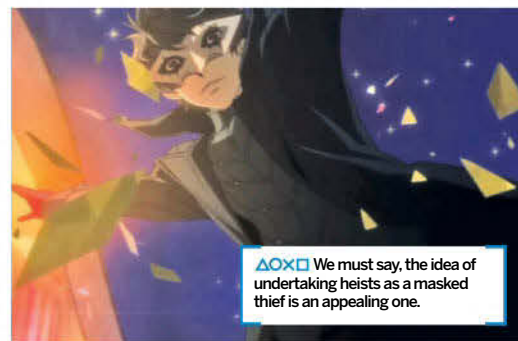
SHADOWS

For Jung, the shadow represents aspects of our personality that we refuse to associate ourselves with and, consequently, reject. In the *Persona* games, these negative emotions constellate into the 'Shadows' that you face throughout the game.



THE UNCONSCIOUS

The unconscious is neither inherently good or bad, but it can become dangerous if not kept in balance. In the *Persona* games, aspects of its characters' personality that they've pushed into their unconscious come back to confront them as enemies.



△×□ We must say, the idea of undertaking heists as a masked thief is an appealing one.





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Dragon's Dogma Online

Goblins, Arisen!



WHAT ARE YOU playing at, Capcom? You've gone all quiet on the *Deep Down* front since showing it off around the announcement of the PS4, and now you've gone and announced this unexpected, but welcome, sequel to one of the most well-received new IPs of the last generation. To the untrained eye, *Dragon's Dogma Online* and *Deep Down* are essentially the same game – both are high fantasy RPGs with a heavy focus on online gameplay, and the free-to-play model employed by both games has a lot of people worried. We've seen the pay-to-win model ruin many a 'freemium' title, and until we see some numbers, there will always be concerns of a repeat offence. We'd much rather just pay up front and enjoy a full game – a rarity in this DLC-centric age, admittedly – but regardless, we'll be grabbing this from the Japanese PS Store and smashing it until Capcom blesses us with Western launch information. Seeing as how this looks like it will rectify pretty much all of our grievances with the original game, we *really* don't want to miss out.

First and foremost among the improvements is the inclusion of online multiplayer. The original was crying out for it but, whether due to technical issues with getting an online suite up and running, or simply to allow the innovative Pawn system room to breathe, we never got to actively hunt with friends. We could take along their Pawns – custom user-created characters – and it looks like we will be able to again, but it's just not the same as sharing the thrill of downing a beast 20 times your size with a few mates. *Monster Hunter* fans will know what we're talking about here. More players means more fun, basically, but also quicker hunts and more loot as a result. It's win-win and we're glad Capcom has finally managed to cater for socially-minded players. It managed with *Monster Hunter* back on PS2, after all – that's where we first caught the hunting bug – but in fairness, *Dragon's Dogma's* world is almost the opposite of the hunting genre's usual fragmented arenas.

Yes, what we're presented with here is a sprawling open world map that stretches as far as the eye can see. Minimal loading made the

original's massive map a joy to explore, so we're hoping that the addition of multiplayer hasn't forced Capcom to break it down into chunks – there's nothing quite like seeing a speck on the horizon take on tiny humanoid form as you approach before growing steadily as you close in on what is actually a towering ogre, or managing to spot a distant griffon in flight and tracking it all the way to its lair for an epic showdown. 'Bosses', if you can call them that, are a cornerstone of the *Dragon's Dogma* experience, and pretty much all of fantasy and mythology's most famous creatures are on the guest list. These range all the way from small critters like goblins, harpies and wolves to larger foes such as ogres and beholders, and all the way up to bloody great dragons, as the title suggests. The largest of these in the original stands as one of the most inventive showdowns of all time – the huge Ur Dragon has such a stupid amount of health that individual players can barely dent it, but all damage done to it by everyone is tracked server-side and the community works together to take the bastard down. It's asynchronous multiplayer



△×□ Harpies can be pain to deal with if you don't have ranged support. With spells or arrows, though, they're easy enough.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

△ The same great *Dragon's Dogma* formula, now with added multiplayer!

○ You'll be able to play it without ever spending a penny.

× The original did well in the West, so Capcom would be crazy not to localise.

○ It'll give us something to do once we're done with *Bloodborne* and *The Witcher 3*.

at its best and still is still popular today – Ur has been downed over 650 times since launch by the PS3 community alone, so we're looking forward to seeing what kind of encounters along the same lines Capcom can dream up for this sequel.

It may not look incredible, but fans will tell you to look past that, and they'd be right. Capcom more than makes up for the game's slightly dated looks with a sense of scale, a surprising amount of character, and solid lore to the world as well as the depth of combat, where you can scale beasts, sling huge AOE spells, fire off entire quivers in seconds or just go full old-school and get stuck in with a massive lump of metal. This is one to watch and no mistake – check out the PS3 original, if you've still got your old console hooked up, while we wait for Capcom to remember that it quite likes money and announce a Western release.

Luke Albigés

DRAGON'S DOGMA ONLINE is being filled with terrifying beasts by Capcom. Prepare for the hunt with the help of the official site: www.dd-on.jp

“THE OPEN WORLD MAP STRETCHES AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE”

△×□ Wolves may not seem that scary, but a hungry pack can tear through low level characters, especially at night.



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Disgaea 5: Alliance Of Vengeance

That's Numberwang!



THE NETHERWORLDS ARE

shattered. The Prinnyes are running wild. Souls of the damned are all over the place, and the Void Dark encroaches on the Netherworld, threatening to absorb everything into its inky nothingness. Only you can stop it – you, the cocky young upstart who harbors powers in his body comparable to an Overlord. Only you, Killia, who seeks revenge on the Void Dark can unite the Netherrealms and bring down the perpetual evil that threatens to swallow it.

So far, so *Disgaea*, right? That might sound like a heavier story than one you'd expect from a series that, so far, has spun tales about a kid trying to take over a school for lost souls, or a guy that wants to

be more than just a penguin wrangler, but hey – we're expecting *Disgaea 5* to at least take the edge off the story with its crazy cast and crew. So far, a princess of the 'Gorgeous Underworld' running away from a political marriage, has been revealed, along with the demon queen of Rabbit World – a place where giant rabbit-like Prinnyes seem to be the only occupants.

The fifth canon installment in the SRPG series promises to take full advantage of the PS4's improved hardware, and in a way that only developer Nippon Ichi could think of: the game is going to have battles featuring over 100 enemies on-screen at once. Now considering the last game could render 10 maximum, that's a pretty hefty

“ONLY YOU, KILLIA, WHO SEEKS REVENGE ON THE VOID DARK CAN UNITE THE NETHERREALMS”

△×○ There are new enemy types, finally! These bears look vicious, too. We hope that, once you dispatch them, you can cook them into curries...



△×○ To boost your stats before a battle, you have to cook a curry. Yeah, you read that right. You better know your Korma from your Katsu...





WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Disgaea is known for its replayability – levelling up a weapon can take over 10 hours on its own.
- It'll be the first traditional SRPG available on the PS4, and will easily be one of the best.
- Disgaea features that camp kind of weirdness that you'd be hard pushed to find elsewhere.
- Prinnies, dood!

PRINNY 101

The Prinny has become the mascot of the *Disgaea* series and newcomers may feel a little weirded out by them at first, so here's a quick rundown on the penguin-like demons...

WHAT

A Prinny is a essentially penguin with bat-like wings, pegs for feet and, supposedly, is filled with explosives. Sucks to be them.

WHY

Disgaea's artist, Takehito Harada, invented the Prinny when he was creating a character 'the player couldn't imagine the thoughts of'.

HOW

Prinnies are basically the lowest rung of the *Disgaea* universe, humans whose souls have been totally condemned and must work forever for minimum wage.



step up. When you also consider the plot synopsis for *Disgaea 5* mentions 'The Lost' – an army of over one million soldiers destined to follow the Void Dark to their doom – then you begin to get an idea of the battles you'll be taking part in.

In the midst of this 50-on-50 combat (!), it's likely you'll need a little clarification on who can attack what and who's immune to who. Luckily, Nippon Ichi has listened to fan feedback from the last game (a little bit, at least) and decided to slightly overhaul the fairly inaccessible, screen-dominating UI. This time, there'll be an extra tab on the screen detailing a unit's strengths and weaknesses when you hover over them – something that required dipping into menus to find before. It sounds like a small addition, but when you are lobbing elemental blocks left, right and center, you will be happy it's there.

There are some as-yet undisclosed 'new systems' being incorporated into the game, too.

We can safely assume these will be new ways to form alliances outside of battle – replacing the 'Classroom' and 'Government' mechanics of *Disgaea 3* and *Disgaea 4* respectively. There'll also no doubt be something similar to the 'Reverse Pirating' system found in *Disgaea 4* – that is, a new way of going into your weapons and finding more powerful gear within them. Other than that, the game is flush with new classes alongside all the returning Prinnies, mages and cat-things you love.

Nippon Ichi stated a couple of months back that it's taken a gamble releasing the game only on PS4 – it was originally going to go multi-platform with the release. If the game doesn't see impressive enough sales, it could be the last *Disgaea* to make the transcontinental leap, and that would be a tragedy for the SRPG scene and *Disgaea* fans alike. At least *Alliance Of Vengeance* looks good enough to inspire some pretty good sales, then.

Dom Peppiatt

DISGAEA 5 is being developed by the Prinnies at Nippon Ichi Software. It's due out in the UK in Q3 2015. Jump through your portal to <http://disgaea.jp/5/> for more.

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The Forest

Cannibal Holocaust meets Minecraft



GOOD HORROR GAMES make you feel like you're *there*. *Alien: Isolation* is slow and atmospheric. *The Last Of Us* is loud, brutal and grounded.

And now *The Forest*, from Endnight Games, is taking tangible horror in a new direction.

Creative director Ben Falcone explains how *The Forest*, is designed to submerge you in horror. "Our goal is to put people in a situation," says Falcone. "Picture yourself crash landed. Your son's been kidnapped [and] pale naked guys are trying to kill you. We want to capture that sense of being hunted. We give you enough tools so you can make some decisions, and come up with ideas on how to survive, but we've tried to re-think each element of a survival game, and find unique solutions.

"Take our inventory system. Most survival games have a 2D inventory system, but we wanted

enemies will just blindly run at you and die. We wanted enemies that would sometimes seem scared and would flee, and other times would not attack and just stalk you or watch from the trees. They're an intelligent foe that's unpredictable, and curious of the player, but still deadly. It's an ongoing process but we're always trying to give them interesting behaviours so they aren't always about just attacking the player directly."

The Forest's enemies will typically come out at night, leaving you free to explore the landscape during the day and pillage it for supplies, which feels very familiar to the colossal survival giant that is *Minecraft*. There are no objective markers or quests, either, which gives players the opportunity to engross themselves in *The Forest's* world – a decision that lets Endnight challenge and change how horror games are structured.

"PICTURE YOURSELF CRASH LANDED. YOUR SON'S BEEN KIDNAPPED AND NAKED GUYS ARE TRYING TO KILL YOU"

to make ours 3D, so we literally took a back pack and emptied it onto our floor, then placed a some items around and tried to see what would make the most sense in real life. We used this approach for almost all the elements in the game, trying to work out the most realistic feeling and also the least annoying way to get information across to players."

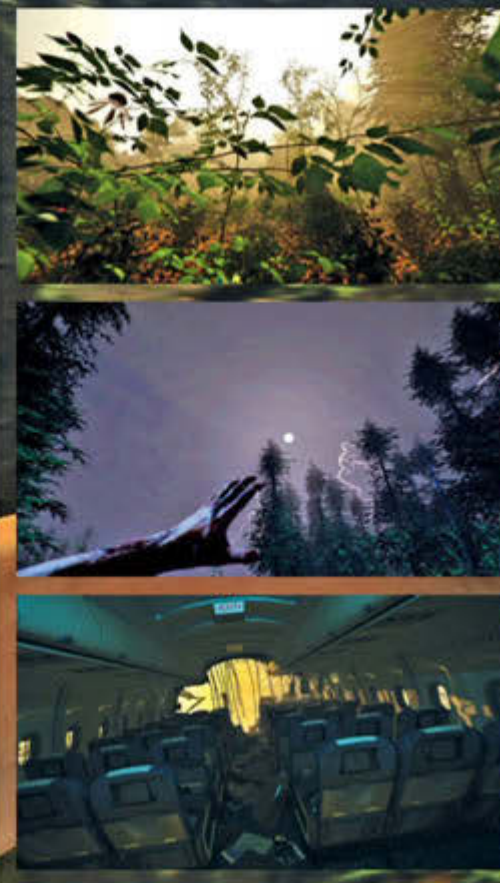
Realism isn't all *The Forest* is shooting for. Its crafting system for instance, which allows you to chop down trees, collect stones and sticks, and cook food, is very accessible, allowing you to get stuck into the action right from the get go. Likewise, your enemies are mutated cannibals, natives of the eponymous forest. Disfigured, animalistic and out to get you, they've more in common with zombies than any human enemy. But still, Endnight wants to make them believably frightening.

"We wanted them to seem alive," says Falcone, "and also multi-dimensional. In most games,

"It came from a growing frustration with all modern videogames," concludes Falcone. "I felt like everything I was playing had some NPC yelling at me to do something. I kept playing games and literally announcing to the room 'I'm done. I'm 35. I don't need someone yelling at me what to do all the time.' However, developing a game with no markers or quests has been really hard. It's taken a long time so far, and has meant creating lots of systems to tie all the elements together. But that's also satisfying for us, as developers. What we're trying to capture is a new take on how a survival horror game could work. It's still in progress, but we're discovering a lot as we go."

Ed Smith

THE FOREST is being chased by naked cannibals at Endnight Games. The alpha version is available now on PC from Endnight's website survivetheforest.com



SHARE THIS



THE HILLS HAVE EYES

The Forest's enemies will watch... and learn

People love to share footage of the crazy things that happen to them in games like *Minecraft* and *DayZ*. But in *The Forest*, those unique moments may take on a tone that's more... sinister. Enemies adapt to your style – if you attack them often, they'll attack back, and hard. If you leave them be, they'll just watch. From the trees. Creepy.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



Survival and crafting mechanics combined with first-person melee combat.



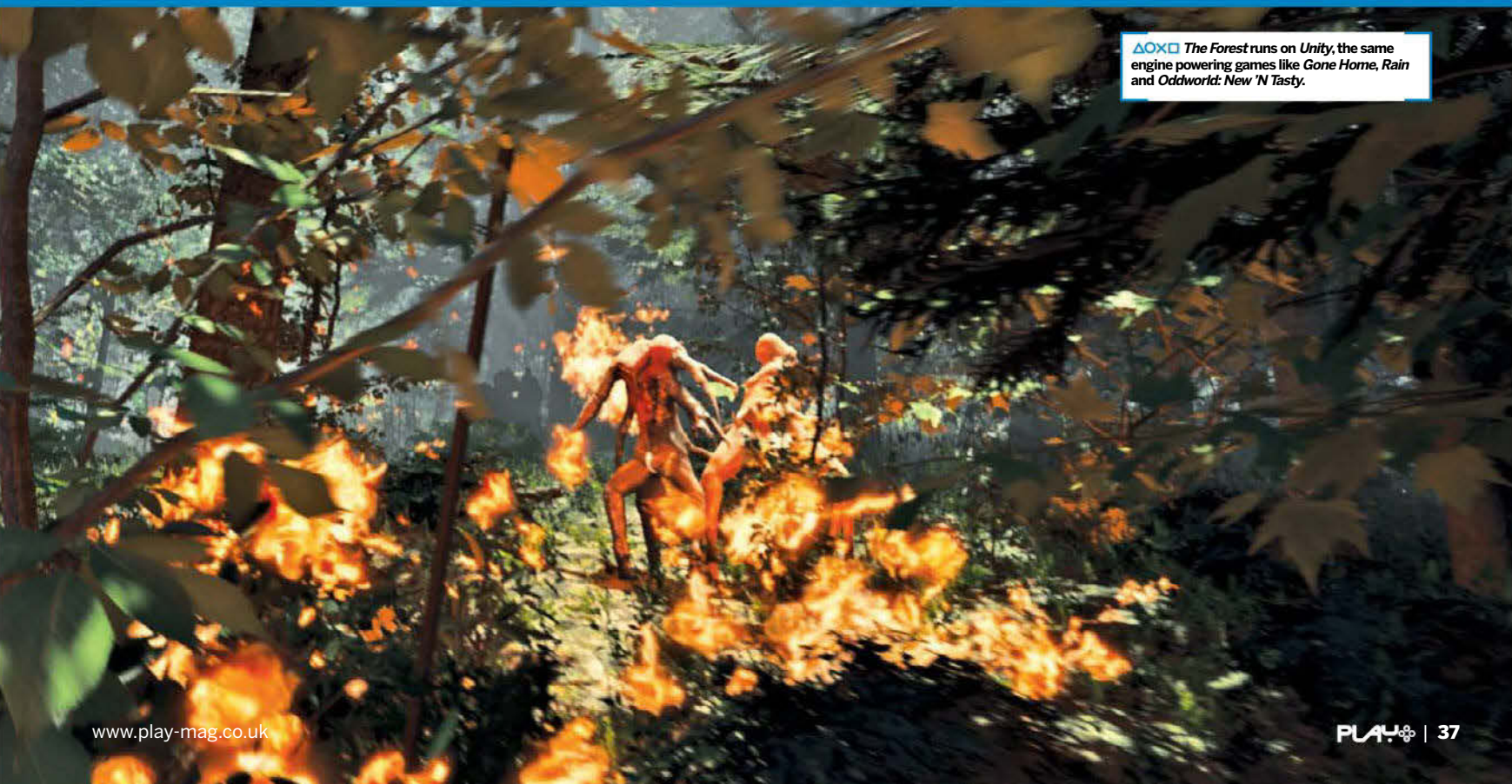
Visuals designed by special effects artists from *The Amazing Spider-Man* films.



Endless gameplay with no set missions or quests – the only goal is to survive.



Enemies who adapt their attacks and aggression level to the player's behaviour.



ANATOMY OF... RATCHET

CLANK IT TO 11

Insomniac has said that this year's *Ratchet & Clank* for PS4 is not a remake of the first game, but rather "a complete re-imagining," though we expect this reboot to maintain the key features of the series from a mechanical perspective. That means 3D platforming mixed with a bit of puzzle solving and, most importantly, a huge roster of over-the-top weapons for us to play around with.

Anyone who has been with PlayStation for any length of time will know about Ratchet & Clank. If you don't, then you're going to have a chance to get acquainted with Ratchet in his first PS4 outing later this year...

HOLLYWOOD STAR

One of the reasons that *Ratchet & Clank* is getting a reboot is that the game is intended to tie-in with the series' first outing on the silver screen, also due this year. The idea is presumably that the rebooted *Ratchet & Clank* game will serve as an ideal entry point for people coming to the series for the very first time, via the film.

BFFS

As the title suggests, Ratchet is always accompanied by his little robot buddy, Clank. Clank spends a lot of his time strapped to Ratchet's back, where he functions as a heli-pack. However, there are sections in the games in which you are able to control Clank to explore areas that are inaccessible to Ratchet. Clank also has the ability to take control of Gadgebots and have them perform actions on his behalf.

PLAYSTATION STAPLE

Ratchet & Clank has got a long history with PlayStation. The first game came out on PS2 back in 2002, with three more being released on that system. Then there is the *Ratchet & Clank Future* series, of which there were three released on PS3. Once you take into account the spin-offs and the HD collection you've got yourself a whole lot of *Ratchet & Clank*.

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Ratchet & Clank



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The Elder Scrolls Online

Cancel all your plans, Tamriel is coming to PlayStation 4



IT'S BEEN A long time coming.

We've been very patient, we paid our dues, and we played *Skyrim* until our fingers bled and our loot bags were full of butterfly wings and Nirnroot. But now, finally, the wait is over. *The Elder Scrolls Online* has rebranded itself as *The Elder Scrolls Online: Tamriel Unlimited* and Bethesda has announced a release date for PS4.

Twiddling of thumbs aside, this wait hasn't necessarily been a bad thing. In addition to the anticipation of waiting more than a year for

what is possibly going to be a groundbreaking game for consoles, we are just bursting to see what kind of difference an extra year's worth of development has made to the game itself.

Chances are you're already familiar with the general play-style of the *Elder Scrolls* series – you're basically left to your own devices shortly after completing a series of tutorial steps that familiarise you with the game. After that, you can quite literally do whatever you want, go wherever you want, or even attack whoever you want (expect a large fine and some jail time, though).

TESO follows this trend in almost exactly the same way, with a few exceptions. Expect to find all manner of consumables and ingredients on your travels, most of which will be in the boxes and barrels that seem to litter Tamriel's landscape. Crafting has always been a big part of any *Elder Scrolls* game and we love that, but it can be a little daunting if you are a new player to the series. You can easily find your inventory full of what seems to be useless junk before you've even made it out of the tutorial, but don't worry – as soon as you make your way to your particular

"IT'S EASY TO FALL INTO THE TRAP OF ASSUMING TESO IS THE NEXT ELDER SCROLLS GAME. IT ISN'T"



SHARE THIS



MOLAG BAL

Can't we just stay at the tavern?

If you're wondering how close to the end-game this is, you'll be surprised to learn that this big guy appears towards the end of the tutorial. Gone are the days of weak starter bosses that you can fell with an accidental cough – you'll get a sense of achievement toppling foes like the vampiric Molag Bal.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



There are no character specialisation limits, so go crazy with your characters.



This game will be a pioneer – you won't find a console MMO anything like it. Yet.



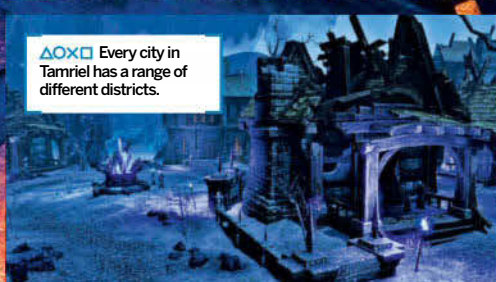
The few areas that are available will already have you questing for days on end.



You can craft pretty much whatever you want. Food, shoes, potions... anything!



Every city in Tamriel has a range of different districts.



faction's major cities, you'll find quest markers that explain how to combine all that junk together to make useful items for your character.

By now, a few of you may have got your hands on the PC version and are getting in some good practice time in preparation for the PS4 release, and unless you've been living under a rock, you'll be familiar with the four playable classes – Dragonknight, Sorcerer, Nightblade and Templar. But as you venture further into the game and inevitably level up, you'll be able to specialise your character in certain skill paths, one of three for each class. Each specialisation provides you with different skills and spells for your character. Add that to the already vast array of weapon and armour skills available, and you may be spoilt for choice; you'll have a hard time choosing where to spend those precious skills points each time you level up. Nothing is forever though, and you'll be able to reset all of these skills should you decide that you want to go in a different direction with your character.

With all of this in mind, it's easy to fall into the trap of assuming *TESO* is the next *Elder Scrolls* game. It isn't. It's a standalone game in its own

right, although you can draw up similarities to something like *Skyrim* and even *Morrowind*, you can't expect it to feel the same as these classics. It is, at its core, an MMO, not a traditional RPG and it should be treated as such. This is likely to be a good thing, however, as it has a chance of exposing itself to a lot of players that would usually stick to one particular gaming genre.

One of the biggest challenges *TESO* faces is to break out into a market that is already dominated by a few, but very successful, games, but we have faith. It's going to be exciting to see just where *TESO* will place itself amongst PlayStation MMO giants such as *Final Fantasy XIV*. *TESO* has the potential to do very well by putting itself out there on consoles. That's a lot of players that it can appeal to. If Zenimax has spent this last year perfecting the console release, then we all have a lot to look forward to when *TESO* finally makes it debut on PlayStation 4 in a few months.

Mark Dodge

THE ELDER SCROLLS ONLINE is being polished at the local forge by Zenimax Online Studios. Check the website for more details: www.elderscrollsonline.com



ETA TBC

DEV WARHORSE STUDIOS

PUB TBC

TWITTER @WARHORSESTUDIOS

Kingdom Come: Deliverance

History Channel: the game

PS4

YOU MAY HAVE heard of this game over the past year or so and be wondering where the hell the PS4 version is. As it goes, *Kingdom*

Come: Deliverance is causing more of a stir than most Kickstarter alumni, promising an authentic medieval RPG experience that does away with elves, dragons and comical arrows to knees and replaces them with weighty melee combat, sprawling countryside and horribly painful and realistic arrows to shinbones. The game has been in the kiln for a while, and while we knew that a PS4 version was planned alongside the PC release, until now there have been barely any updates on the matter. Luckily for you, we've completed an RPG fetch quest of our own and spoken to Daniel Vávra, the game's director, who seems confident with how everything is going.

"Development is always difficult," he explains. "When it's not, you are doing something wrong! So we are solving many problems every day, but it's our job. Overall, I am quite happy with where

we are [with the game]. I think that we have good creative people who like the game they are making and it can be seen in the results."

He's confident that the big experiment is working out, and the game is currently in the alpha stage on PC. This aura of confidence extends to how Warhorse is building the game for multiple platforms. "One of the reasons why we chose *CryEngine 3* was that it's multi-platform and we would not need to spend too much time with porting," he tells us. "Currently, our main goal is to get all the core features working on PC and when this is ready, optimise it for other platforms. But we already have working ports on consoles without much effort, so hopefully there will be no major problem. We have a PS4 version already. It's slow and unstable at the moment, but we needed very little effort to make it happen. Our target is to have all platforms ready at the same time."

We've spent a couple of hours exploring the small slice of the Kingdom of Bohemia that is currently available, and it has been impressive.

Even at this stage, textures, lighting and model detail are through the roof, which bodes well for beady-eyed graphics fanatics and is hopefully a good sign for how *Kingdom Come* will look when it finally reaches PlayStation 4.

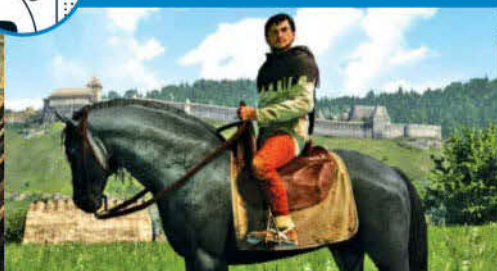
One would be forgiven for taking a brief look at the trailers for *Kingdom Come* and seeing it as just another Western RPG, where the first-person perspective has more than a hint of *Skyrim* about it. What this game offers that others don't is authenticity at every level. There are examples of this oozing out of the game's every pore, from NPC routines that can be directly affected by you and real-time wear and tear to armour and clothing, right through to a needs system that requires you to eat and drink to stay healthy.

Combat is also designed to be realistic and something that Vávra saw as key during the game's development. "It's one of the most complicated and risky tasks," he explains. "We are still iterating to get the best compromise between controls, realism and CPU efficiency."

"DEVELOPMENT IS ALWAYS DIFFICULT. WHEN IT'S NOT, YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING WRONG"



SHARE THIS



EN GARDE

You've got an arm off

With the promise of such realistic combat in *Kingdom Come*, we're hoping that it proves to be quite tech. Ideally, we'd like to see weighty medieval combat with proper parry/riposte mechanics and ideally some gory decapitations. There are bound to be many compelling duels and battles to be had, so get sharing when this finally hits shelves.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ⬤ It offers a fresh, realistic approach to action-RPGs, with a ban on fantasy.
- ⬤ Open-ended quests will take in everything from fetch quests to castle sieges.
- ✕ The realism extends to your character, requiring you to eat and drink.
- ⬤ It's set in the interesting years during the Papal Schism of the 14th and 15th Centuries.

Whatever happens, we still won't know for sure when *Kingdom Come* will charge onto PS4 – even Warhorse itself doesn't know. It seems to be in a pretty good state on PC that belies its alpha status, so we can assume that it'll be late this year or early 2016 before a concrete PS4 release emerges. It's one to keep an eye on, though, as Daniel Vávra and his team are hell-bent on creating an RPG experience like no other.

"I always say that this game should work as kind of a time machine – are you interested in history, fencing, battles, medieval culture, architecture and good story? Then this is your chance to experience it as close to as it was as possible. And we are trying to give you as much freedom as possible, so you can really enjoy it and explore the world any way you want."

Steve Holmes

KINGDOM COME: DELIVERANCE is practicing archery with Warhorse Studios. For more historically accurate info visit: www.kingdomcomerpg.com



⬤ Player choices will have sprawling consequences and NPCs have daily routines that can be affected by the player.

GRAVITY: THE GAME

Set in space where, as we all know, no one can hear you scream, float-about-in-a-space-suit simulator *Adrift* can be loosely described as *Gravity: The Game*. From a first-person perspective, we'll explore zero gravity environments in the wake of some kind of disaster that has destroyed a space station. Your character has no memory of the incident, so part of the game will involve piecing together what happened via the clues you discover.

GOING HOME

Adrift sounds like a game with two key elements. On the one hand, it's about survival. You will periodically run out of oxygen as you explore your environment, so will have to search for oxygen tanks as you go to avoid suffocation. Then there is the puzzle-solving element. You will need to repair an escape ship in order to return to Earth, so we expect the game's puzzle aspects to be based around completing that objective.

VR SPACEMAN

It's interesting to note that *Adrift* developer Three One Zero has previously talked about developing the game to work with Oculus Rift on PC. You can probably guess where we are going with this; if *Adrift* is going to support VR, the PS4 version is a prime candidate for Morpheus support. A first-person game where you float about in the sublime void of space, the stars all around you and the Earth on your horizon; sounds wonderful. And terrifying.

CAPTAIN'S LOG

Telling parts of your story via audio logs, as in *BioShock*, has become an established trope. The success with which audio logs have been used as a storytelling device has varied wildly, so it'll be interesting to see how they work here. Interestingly, there will be items owned by other crew members that you will have to decide whether to return to Earth or not – we suspect audio logs will provide the context with which you can make those decisions.

DEAL WITH IT

The game was conceived by former Microsoft employee Adam Orth, who resigned in response to controversy that arose from telling those concerned about the Xbox One's DRM policies to "deal with it". Orth says the game is in part a metaphor for his experience in the wake of that. Hopefully *Adrift* turns out to be more than just a metaphor for a dude having to change jobs because he was a bit rude, because it's difficult to get on board with that.

ETA Q3 2015 | PUB 505 GAMES | PUB THREE ONE ZERO

Adrift



Instant Expert

FPS FATIGUE



You're probably well familiar with the phrase 'FPS fatigue'. Hell, you've probably even felt it at some point, with FPS after FPS being churned out over the last few years in attempts for developers to one-up each other. Let's admit, it can get tiresome.



Not just for us players, though. The team behind *Adrift*, Three One Zero, have worked on their fair share of first-person shooters, from *Call Of Duty's Modern Warfare* and *Black Ops* series, through to the *Medal Of Honor* games and *Homefront*. So quite a few, then.



It's no surprise, then, to find that part of the reason that those individuals have cited for moving to a new team to make *Adrift* is that they are fed up with making one FPS after another. If we were in their shoes, we would probably feel the same way.



The team's experience in first-person games should serve them well, but making a survival puzzle game, as opposed to a shooter, is a completely different prospect. We hope the team can prove that they've got the ability to make that transition.

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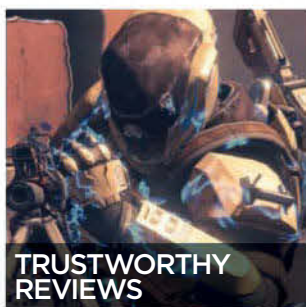


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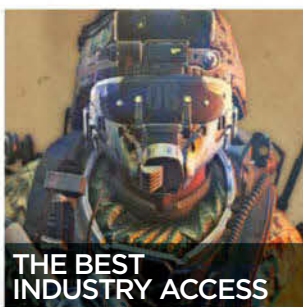
EXCLUSIVE: THE ELDER SCROLLS ONLINE | NEW TOMB RAIDER DETAILS | 40 HUGE ACTION GAMES



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PREVIEW

A quick look at some of the other awesome games that are just around the corner

1 STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: 2016

THAT FACT THAT the much-loved *Battlefront* series will be returning in the guise of the rebooted *Star Wars: Battlefront* is, of course, good news for fans. What's also worth being excited about is the that DICE now has custodianship of the series. Why? *Battlefront* is basically *Battlefield* with lasers. Just swap the jeeps out for AT-ATs and AT-STs, the jet planes out for TIE Fighters and X-Wings, make sure your classes are *Star Wars* themed with the appropriate blasters and such, then you're golden. Okay, we're exaggerating slightly, but the point is that DICE has a proven record of making excellent class-based multiplayer games.

2 ROUNDABOUT

FORMAT: PS4, VITA

RELEASE DATE: Q2 2015

THIS IS A game with a bit of an odd setup. You control a limousine that is constantly rotating in circles like an out-of-control spinning top, and you have to guide that limo around a town without hitting obstacles and blowing up. You pick up passengers from around the town, at which point you'll be treated to live-action Seventies B-movie-style cutscenes that push the game's off-kilter story forward, then you must deliver said passengers to their destinations as quickly as possible. We have had a chance to play *Roundabout* and, while it's a bit hard to get your head around at first, its fun arcade action ultimately won us over and has got us looking forward to the game's release on PS4 and Vita.



1



2



4



3 BATMAN ARKHAM KNIGHT

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: 2 JUNE 2015

THE CONCLUSION TO

Rocksteady's celebrated *Arkham* trilogy is one of the most anticipated games of 2015 and rightly so – the quality of the two Rocksteady games that preceded it means it deserves that kind of high profile. We're pleased that Rocksteady is ending its association with Batman here – it gives the talented team a chance to go out with a bang, rather than waiting for the series to go stale, and it means that we'll get to see Rocksteady bring its skills to a new IP. In the meantime, though, we're looking forward to getting behind the wheel of the Batmobile and chasing down criminals.

4 NO MAN'S SKY

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: Q3 2015

WITH ALL THE hype surrounding *No Man's Sky*, we're tempted to be a little skeptical. After all, it's still not 100 per cent clear exactly what you actually do in the game. Sure, we know you can collect resources, trade for better ships and engage in combat, but precisely how do those systems work and will they be enjoyable? Still, there's something irresistible about the game's promise to offer us an effectively infinite universe to explore in which we can go anywhere we want and see things that nobody else has ever seen before. For that reason, it's hard not to get excited about it, despite our trepidation about whether the game will be as awesome in practice as in concept.



3



ROUNDUP



8



5



7



6

5 BASTION

FORMAT: PS4, VITA
RELEASE DATE: Q2 2015

NO DOUBT ANY of you who are PS Plus subscribers will have taken the opportunity to play *Transistor* when it popped up as part of February's lineup on PS4. Well, if you enjoyed it, you'll be pleased to hear that we are getting another title from the developer behind that game this year. Supergiant Games's *Bastion* – finally making its way to PlayStation consoles – shares some similarities with *Transistor* in that it is an isometric action game with some soft RPG mechanics, and it has a story that's told via narration (with the same voice actor as *Transistor*). The differences here are the setting and the fact that *Bastion* lacks *Transistor*'s turn-based mechanics, instead focusing on real-time action.

6 CARMAGEDDON REINCARNATION

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: Q4 2015

FUNDED ON KICKSTARTER all the way back in 2012, we've been waiting some time for the rebirth of cult racer *Carmageddon* to hit PS4. Development has been progressing on PC, though, and it looks like the game is getting to a point where a 2015 release is feasible. For those of you who don't know, *Carmageddon* is an over-the-top racer with eccentric characters, outlandish cars and ridiculous power-ups in which you can win by conventional means, or by smashing up all your opponents, *Destruction Derby* style. We loved the original game back in the day, so we just hope that this new version can live up to it.

7 KING'S QUEST

FORMAT: PS4, PS3
RELEASE DATE: Q3 2015

WHEN THE STALWART adventure game series *King's Quest*, which started all the way back in 1984, petered to a halt in 1998, it seemed unlikely that it would return any time soon. Indeed, the announcement last year that we would be getting a new *King's Quest* game certainly wasn't something we expected. The new *King's Quest* looks as if it will retain the puzzle solving and the story elements that made the original series famous back in the day, but the new game will also introduce platforming elements, hopefully not to the detriment of its adventure game roots. We look forward to giving the revived fantasy adventure series a go when its first episode releases in the autumn of this year.

8 MOON HUNTERS

FORMAT: PS4, VITA
RELEASE DATE: 2016

IN THIS RATHER lovely looking RPG you embark on a series of quests with up to three other players, the outcome of which will shape not only your character, but also the world itself. The game is all about mythology, with worthwhile heroes being remembered as constellations in the sky. How your character is remembered is shaped by decisions that you make throughout the game that display your personality and create a reputation that defines your character's myth. One tribe may think that you are cruel or selfless, for example, depending on the actions you take towards them. Another tribe may think you're flirtatious as a result of you trying it on with everyone in sight. You naughty devil, you.

VITA'S NOT

Don't listen to the naysayers who pop up periodically to declare the Vita has no games. While they make their false proclamations, brilliant games just keep on coming, and the console's dazzling and diverse lineup is only getting better...



DEAD



TITAN SOULS

ETA: Q2 2015

Do you like boss battles? Then you should probably pay attention to *Titan Souls*, a top-down RPG that's built around defeating 'Titans'. That *Shadow Of The Colossus*-like structure of finding and defeating huge bosses is intriguing enough, but the game also has a couple of other cool ideas. For one, you've

only got one arrow, which means you have to carefully place your shots and retrieve it each time you fire. One hit will kill you, so you have to make sure you're careful about avoiding attacks as you do so. It's going to be difficult, then, but that should only make taking down bosses all the more satisfying.



STEAMWORLD HEIST

ETA: Q3 2015

Following on from the success of *SteamWorld Dig*, the Vita is going to be getting a game that's set in the same universe, but is quite different in how it plays. *SteamWorld Heist* is a game about scavenging a destroyed planet with a crew of robots that you recruit as you go. To compete for precious resources,

you will have to board enemy ships and engage in turn-based combat against other scavengers. It's got the pedigree (*SteamWorld Dig* is pretty damn good) and it's got the style, so there's a good argument to believe that this is going to be a game worthy of the *SteamWorld* moniker when it comes to Vita.



THE SWINDLE

ETA: Q2 2015

Call us manic kleptomaniacs if you will, but we love games that are about stealing stuff, hence, we are excited to play *The Swindle*. The set-up is simple: break into a procedurally generated building, hack as many computers as you can, steal as much cash as you can, and then escape to your airship. You can then spend the cash you've 'earned' to upgrade your steampunk gadgets and cyberpunk bio-mods in order to give you the ability to undertake heists on a grander scale. We love the visual style of this game, but more than that, we love the concept which it is built around. We just can't wait to gear up and pull off some heists when it lands on Vita this year.



NUCLEAR THRONE

ETA: Q2 2015

The next game from Vlambeer, the team behind the excellent *Luftrausers*, is a top-down action game in which you roam post-apocalyptic wastelands as a mutant. The team describes *Nuclear Throne* as a cross between *Hotline Miami* and *The Binding Of Isaac*, the reasoning being that it is fast-paced, procedurally generated and difficult. With the ability to choose a range of mutations for your character, find a vast array of weaponry, and take all that into a world that's different every time you play, *Nuclear Throne* looks to be more than capable of presenting us with a wealth of variety and replayability, as well as a chaotic and intense action experience.



DANGANRONPA ANOTHER EPISODE: ULTRA DESPAIR GIRLS

ETA: Q3 2015

Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc and *Danganronpa 2: Goodbye Dispair* earned themselves 85% and 89% respectively when we reviewed them in **Play**, which tells you that a new *Danganronpa* game is worth your attention. *Ultra Despair Girls* is a spin-off of the series, taking place between the two main games. It's not a visual novel like the mainline titles, but rather a third-person action game. The game seems to have been well received on its Japanese release, but we'll have to wait until we can get our hands on it to make our own judgement.

VOLUME

ETA: Q2 2015

The next game from the man behind *Thomas Was Alone* is a stealth game that retells the story of Robin Hood in a sci-fi setting. The *Metal Gear Solid* series has been cited as an inspiration and if you know anything about **Play**, you'll know that we love *MGS*. Still, it will have its own identity, with developer Mike Bithell saying that he's introducing mechanics that will encourage players to move at a swifter pace than is traditional in the stealth genre. You can't kill your enemies, either, so you sure as hell better master those stealth mechanics.





PERSONA 4: DANCING ALL NIGHT

ETA: Q2 2015

Scratching that rhythm-action itch on Vita is *Persona 4: Dancing All Night*. How an entry in a series that's a spin-off of JRPG *Shin Megami Tensei* ended up getting its own spin-off in the form of a rhythm-action game in which you return to Inaba to battle Shadows via the medium of

dance, we're not quite sure. Still, we love the *Persona* series and we love rhythm-action, so we're not complaining. We will be wearing headphones, however, as we don't want anyone to know about the terribly cheesy J-pop we are going to be dancing along to in the game.



BROKEN AGE

ETA: Q3 2015

We still don't have a definitive release date for *Broken Age* after its 2014 delay, but we feel that it will be coming in 2015. The first act of *Broken Age* has already been released on PC, but we'll be getting the complete package – acts one and two – when the game hits Vita. With its beautiful art style, well-told story of two protagonists leading parallel lives, and its modern take on classic adventure game mechanics, this is a game that we would thoroughly recommend fans of the genre taking a look at.



ALONE WITH YOU

ETA: Q4 2015

The next game from the man behind horror title *Home* (also penciled in to hit Vita at some point, incidentally) is something completely different. *Alone With You* is set in a doomed colony on a dying planet. You are the sole survivor of said colony and you only have a month to escape. To do that, you and the colony's AI will need to recreate dead colony members to leverage their expertise and repair the one escape pod left. Oh, and there's also going to be some romance along the way, apparently, though we're not sure who is falling in love with who. Regardless, this story-focused game's got an intriguing set-up that's got us very much looking forward to playing it.



AXIOM VERGE

ETA: Q2 2015

Wearing its 16-bit retro inspirations on its sleeve, *Axiom Verge* is a 2D Metroidvania game that developer, Tom Happ, says is inspired by the likes of *Rygar*, *Contra*, *Bionic Commando* and *Metroid* (obviously). With platforming, the ability to drill down into the depths and teleport through walls, it is clear that exploration is as much a part of the game as the combat, though gargantuan bosses indicate that aspect will not be neglected either. If you, like us, are familiar with the 16-bit era of videogaming, the game instantly appeals to your nostalgic side. Even leaving that aside, though, we think *Axiom Verge* looks interesting and intricate enough to warrant your attention.



ASSAULT ANDROID CACTUS

ETA: Q3 2015

A chaotic twin-stick shooter firmly within the arcade tradition, *Assault Android Cactus* gives you a roster of eight cartoonish characters to choose from, each of which has a primary weapon with unlimited ammo, and a secondary special weapon that has a cooldown. Weapons can be upgraded as you progress – in fact, they need to be upgraded, because *Assault Android Cactus* fills the entire screen with enemies for you to deal with. We reckon that the majority of our time with this colourful game is going to be spent chasing that legendary number one position on the game's leaderboards.

GEOMETRY WARS 3: DIMENSIONS

ETA: Q2 2015

We gave *Geometry Wars 3: Dimensions* 92% when we reviewed the PS4 version in issue 252 – that tells you that it's well worth paying attention to this game when it comes to Vita. This excellent,

tactile, arcade twin-stick shooter is an ideal fit for the console due to the quick-fire nature of its gameplay. Playing *Geometry Wars* on the go also provides more opportunities to climb those

leaderboards as you look to smash your friend's scores. In a nutshell: it's the best *Geometry Wars* game yet in the palms of your hands. What more could you possibly ask for?



BROFORCE

ETA: Q3 2015

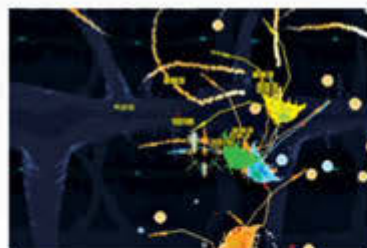
If you've spent some time perusing our YouTube channel, then you may have seen us singing the praises of this game. Even in its early access state on PC, *Broforce* is a brilliant 2D action game and we are delighted that it's coming to Vita. You play as a range of spoof action heroes – Bronan, Rambro, Brobocop, and so on – each of which has a different weapon and a unique special ability that allows you to tear your way through each level in a different style (and we mean that quite literally, because you can take chunks out of the level as well as your foes). Trust us when we tell you that *Broforce* is a hell of a lot of fun.



ONE WAY TRIP

ETA: Q3 2015

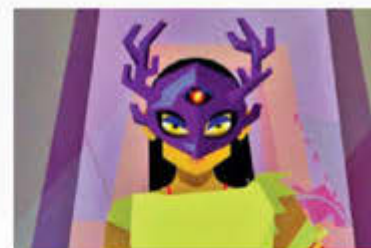
We've been looking forward to the bizarre *One Way Trip* for some time. The set-up for the game is that an attack on the water supply has left a large portion of the country hallucinating and with only six hours to live. You control one such character and have to choose how you are going to spend those final six hours. The game will have a branching narrative woven from the choices you make and even those of other characters. Your choices don't only affect the story, though. They can also change the game's genre, twisting it into an action-based combat game, or a muted, pacifistic, philosophical journey.



RISK OF RAIN

ETA: Q2 2015

Originally funded on Kickstarter back in 2013, *Risk Of Rain* has been in development for some time, but with the game now out on PC, its impending Vita release shouldn't be too far down the line. The game is a 2D sci-fi action platformer in which you take on randomly spawning enemies and bosses as the game gets progressively harder. You can take on the game with online co-op on the PC version, so it'll be interesting to see if that element makes the transition to Vita intact. Oh, and it has got permadeath too, so you better make use of the 100 or so items you can find to aid you in your fight to stay alive.



SEVERED

ETA: Q2 2015

You'll notice that *Severed*'s art style is similar to that of *Guacamelee* and that's because it is being developed by the same studio. In every other aspect, though, the game seems completely different. Starring a one-armed heroine who wields a living sword, *Severed* is a first-person RPG based around touch controls. As you explore the game's world, you will gain abilities by equipping various Totems, which are crafted using the remains of defeated bosses. If the game is up to the standard of *Guacamelee*, a game of which we are big fans, then it is going to be an essential purchase when it hits Vita.

THE BEST GAMES FOR REMOTE PLAY

Don't forget that you can use the Vita's Remote Play to play PS4 games – which is ideal for when you feel too lazy to move



GAME OF THRONES

Twitch action games generally aren't the best for Remote Play due to the fact that there's often noticeable lag. The QTE window in the primarily story-based *Game Of Thrones* is generous enough that this shouldn't be a problem, though.



GRAND THEFT AUTO V

If for no other reason than to see the spectacular sight of *GTA V* running on a handheld, Remote Play is great for *GTA V*. It might not be ideal for some of the more difficult missions, but you'll have no trouble just messing around in the world.



LITTLEBIGPLANET 3

Looking to get creative in *LBP3*? Why not relax while you're creating your own levels? If you can't be bothered with that, *LBP* isn't exactly too demanding on timing, so the platformer is more than playable on the Vita via Remote Play.



CALL OF DUTY: ADVANCED WARFARE

Forget about taking this online with Remote Play – that's just not going to work. If you fancy something a bit brainless, though, then Remote Play is a great option for playing through the campaign while relaxing.



HATOFUL BOYFRIEND

ETA: Q2 2015

In *Hatoful Boyfriend*, you are the only human admitted to the St. PigeonNation's Institute, a school for gifted pigeons. Naturally, you spend your time trying to date said pigeons, because why wouldn't you? As you can probably guess, this cross between visual novel and dating sim doesn't take itself particularly seriously, so there are plenty of laughs to be had throughout this bizarre adventure while romancing your new avian friends. Unless you're really into pigeons; who are we to judge?

THE BANNER SAGA

ETA: Q2 2015

Ask yourself two questions: 1. Do you like turn-based RPGs? 2. Do you like Vikings? If the answer to both of those questions is yes, dear Vita owner, then your dreams are about to come true, because Stoic is bringing its well regarded title, *The Banner Saga*, to Vita this year. One of the most interesting things about the game is that its story doesn't end when you are defeated, which encourages you to accept the consequences of your failure and carry on. If that doesn't convince you, how about the fact that its hand-drawn art looks bloody lovely?



SHU

ETA: Q2 2015

Once we got over the disappointment of discovering that *Shu* wasn't a game starring PlayStation boss Shuhei Yoshida (we can play as him in *Super Time Force Ultra*, after all), we realised that there are other reasons to be excited about it. *Shu* is a 2.5D platformer in which you will come across a variety of characters that you will need to take by the hand and lead to safety. Each of them will have a unique ability, which you can harness to aid your progress. Add the fact that the game is inspired by the *Oddworld* series and you've got our attention.

HOT TOPIC

IS DESTINY DONE?

LUKE ALBIGÉS
DEPUTY EDITOR, PLAY



"WE'RE NOT EVEN A YEAR INTO THIS EPIC VOYAGE"

AS MUCH AS I love *Destiny*, even I would struggle to argue that Bungie's shooter has enough content to keep most normal people hooked to the degree that many MMOs manage. Activision is playing the long game here, and with so many great games breaking cover right now, that's a dangerous play – it's no wonder so many people are moving on from grinding Strikes and waiting on Nightfall resets when Bungie has accidentally made it so easy (well, compared to other MMOs, at least) to cap out your gear. I found I wasn't playing nearly as often after hitting 32 as I was when I was banging my head against Crota's End in search of that last piece of Raid gear, and I played even less after Xur amazingly saw fit to fill the only two gaps in my Exotic library in subsequent weeks, but I still jump back in every now and again even though there's no real reason for me to do so. To me, that's the sign of a great game – I may already have the best gear in the game but if an Iron Banner event allows me to stay at the level cap without having to look like everybody else, of course I'm going to get involved. Fashion *Destiny* is real, people. Not everyone is quite that dedicated, sure, but the option of playing a bunch of PvP for



guaranteed rewards rather than raiding and hoping is certainly welcome. You can see from each update that Bungie is learning as it goes – *Destiny* remains one of the most mechanically excellent shooters we've seen in years, and if it keeps improving at the rate it's going, the rest of it is going to catch up within a year or two. Bungie and Activision have made no secret of the fact that they're in this for the long haul, so to try and judge it now seems just as ridiculous as it did at launch. This isn't *The Order*, or any other standalone experience that can be judged at face value. This is a constantly evolving online game and one that is edging ever closer to being the dream-fulfilling shooter we were all hoping for. If your impatience prevents you from seeing the beautiful Butterfree that eventually emerges



from this perfectly enjoyable Metapod (yes, that was a *Pokémon* reference – deal with it), then you'll only have yourself to blame when you're the only one on your friend list playing *Shadow Of Mordor* DLC when the rest of us are caning a new and improved *Destiny*.

There's some benefit of the doubt involved here, but Bungie deserves it. This is the studio that effectively established Xbox as a viable platform and created the template for the modern console shooter, so its talents should not be underestimated. With players tapping out left, right and centre, though, it may just have to prove itself again in order to win over the masses. House Of Wolves is its opportunity to do just that, so I sincerely hope that Bungie doesn't mess up this chance to win back strays and haters alike – with the right content, this expansion could hook addicts, lapsed fans and even naysayers, making it one of the most important gaming events of the year. If the leaked plans are right, there's an even bigger content drop in the pipeline for the tail end of the year. So no, *Destiny* isn't over. It's only just begun, and the patient will be duly rewarded.



ΔΟΧΔ *Destiny's* Tower is a cool place to chill with friends, especially when you're wearing pumpkin heads.



JOSH WEST
STAFF WRITER, X-ONE MAGAZINE

"A BLEAK ILLUSION THAT OTHER DEVS WILL COPY"

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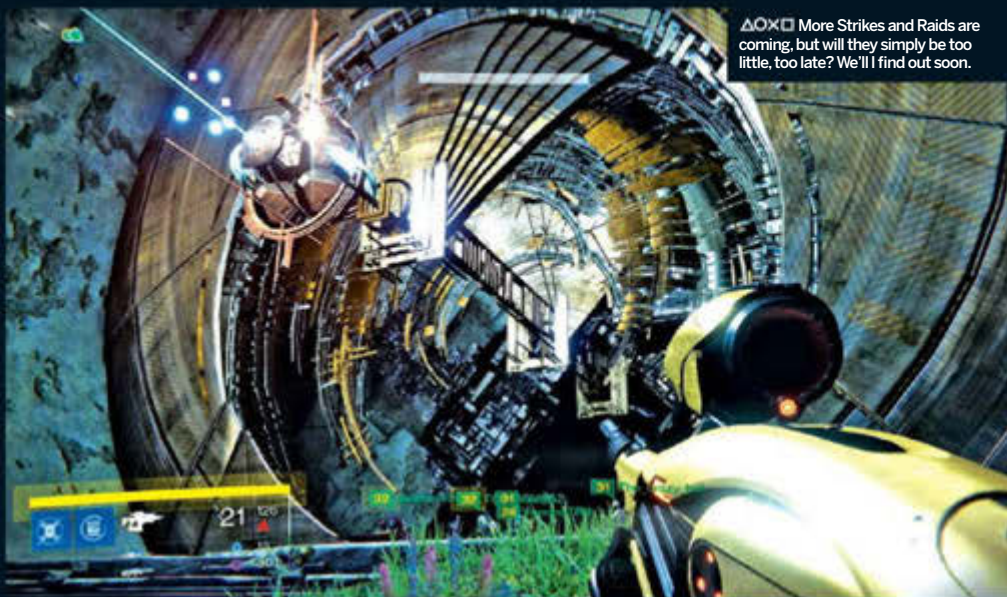
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DESTINY IS TO first-person shooters what *Watch Dogs* was to third-person action games. Great mechanics and good intentions which are ruined by idiotic ideas and rushed execution.

Do you remember when we used to sink hours, evenings and weekends into videogames because they were fun? *Destiny* has ensured that we forget those days and instead sacrifice all of our time to the Altar Of Unsatisfactory Grinding. All hail the almighty Cryptarch and his masochistic love of rendering our time wasted, bow down before Xur and his unearthly love of Strange Coins. Bungie is incapable of changing or fixing *Destiny* for the better, because it itself sacrificed its soul to Activision in an effort to go rogue from Microsoft.

Destiny still has a severe lack of content – that is just a straight-up fact. Even now, more than six months after launch, it's abundantly clear that the game wasn't finished – not by full retail release standards, at least. Bungie conjured and unleashed a bleak illusion with *Destiny* that other publishers will now try to replicate for years, and why wouldn't they? Bungie has cleverly taken a handful of woefully pedestrian story and Strike missions, and successfully dragged them out over hundreds of hours of gameplay. All because you are locked into a slow-burn, badly designed leveling system and the *promise* that it'll be worth it eventually.

But can you honestly say that you're still enjoying the ceaseless repetition, the maddening upgrade system, the disastrously shallow set of missions and the horribly exclusive expansion? If you are, then you're either a liar or a lunatic, because I'd wager

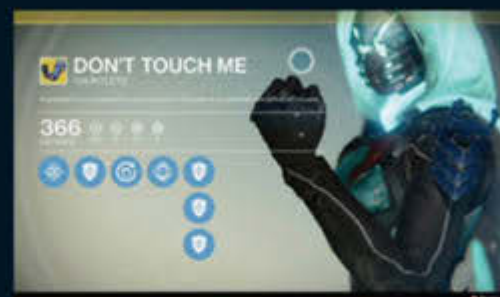


△××□ More Strikes and Raids are coming, but will they simply be too little, too late? We'll find out soon.

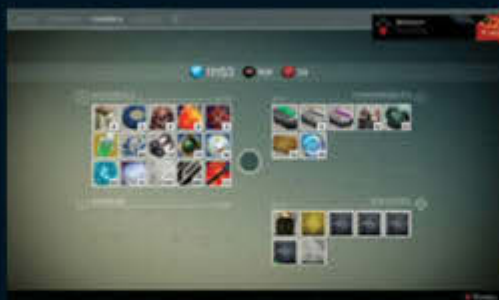
my bank of Radiant Shards that you are just enjoying something you can play with your buddies. Here's the kicker: even *Fuse* was fun with friends. All you're doing now is contributing to prolonging the lifeline of a game that should have died a month after launch. But *Destiny* wasn't designed to be a great game; it has been designed to force you into a cycle of sinking time into something that offers nothing in return. And to get you to *willingly* sink more cash into, under-developed DLC drops – sorry, *expansion packs* – releasing at an alarming rate, of course.

Bungie knows this. Hell, the studio – so confused by its own loot system and end game – had you re-level all of your Exotic items barely three months in: that isn't iterative, it is exploitative. If *World Of Warcraft* had pulled that shit on its players, it wouldn't have just celebrated its tenth anniversary. The Dark Below is so underdeveloped and rushed that players were able to decimate Crota, the game's toughest enemy, by pulling out a bloody LAN cable. That isn't a clever hack you've discovered, that's some serious *SOCOM II*, 2003-era of online gaming oversight right there.

If you're playing *Destiny* for the sake of it, stop. Want a great shared-world shooter? Play



Defiance. Want an awesome MMO on your PS4? Play *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn*. Want a killer FPS? Dig out *Killzone Shadow Fall*. If you're looking for a game that blends all of those together appropriately, give *Destiny* three or four years. Because right now, the game is offering some seriously negative vibes, and that isn't likely to change. It's a game without a soul, devoid of interesting hooks or fun past the first run through its content. There used to be a time when we'd bemoan games that launched so broken and unfulfilling that players were forced to find ways to destroy the loot system and glitch the handful of bosses to death within seconds to keep them fun. Now, we celebrate them. I worry about what that says about the quality of games the industry as a whole is producing.





TOP TEN ANTAGONISTS

THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A BOSS AND AN ANTAGONIST. THE FORMER IS JUST AN ENEMY TO BE DEFEATED. THE LATTER CAN PROVIDE A FOIL TO A PROTAGONIST, SET INTO MOTION THE EVENTS ON WHICH A GAME'S STORY HANGS AND GIVE US PLAYERS A MOTIVE TO PLAY. HERE ARE OUR PICKS...



HANDSOME JACK

THE CEO OF the Hyperion corporation, dictator of Pandora and all round git, Handsome Jack is the primary antagonist of *Borderlands 2*. Having him frequently jump on your comms channel to taunt you, insult you, or talk himself up with his trademark smugness, is a great way of building up a picture of Jack, and it constantly reminds you that he is the bad guy. Despite having some pretty funny lines, he also does some despicable things.



JOKER

BATMAN'S ARCH-NEMESIS is one of the greatest villains ever, not only in comics, or in film, but in videogames too. After allowing himself to be captured by Batman and taken to Arkham Asylum in the game of the same name, Joker enacts his plan to take control, releasing the inmates and beginning a night of hell for Batman. Like a couple of other antagonists on our list, he is a constant, but nebulous threat.



KEFKA

STAKING A CLAIM for the most sadistic villain on our list is *Final Fantasy VI*'s Kefka. Despite his jester-like appearance, Kefka is anything but fun loving; he is unstable, hot-tempered and cruel. From poisoning the water supply of a castle, Kefka moves to make himself a god and enslave the world, before deciding that he would rather just wipe out all existence. When it comes to pure, unhinged psychopathy, Kefka is hard to beat.



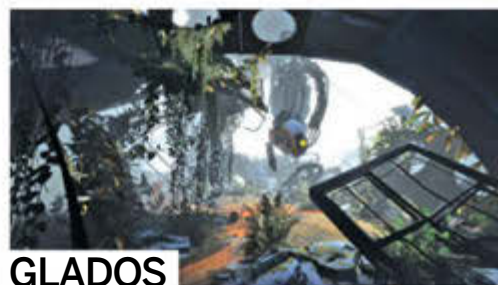
SEIFER

WHAT MAKES SEIFER such a great antagonist is the fact that he is a mirror of *Final Fantasy VIII*'s protagonist, Squall. He starts off as a spiteful bully and develops into the right hand man for the evil sorceress Ultimecia (whilst maintaining his dislikable and abrasive personality). Having you battle Seifer at multiple points throughout the game is a great way of building the sense of rivalry that's established early on in the game.



DR BREEN

THE DE-FACTO RULER of the Earth and puppet of the Combine, *Half-Life 2*'s Dr Breen is an incredibly dislikable man, even if you put aside the fact that he's trying to take you down throughout the game. Not only is he a turncoat who worked with the Combine in order to save himself and gain a position of power, he actually believes that he is some kind of hero for doing so, suggesting that his alliance has saved the human race.



GLADOS

A COMEDY ANTAGONIST she might be, but the *Portal*/series' GLaDOS is one of the best. Her brutal insults are made so much better by her matter-of-fact delivery. Case in point, after insisting that your test results reveal that 'You are a horrible person', GLaDOS proclaims: "Don't let that 'horrible person' thing discourage you. If it makes you feel any better, science has now validated your mother's decision to abandon you on a doorstep." Ouch.



ANDREW RYAN

RAPTURE IS OFTEN described as being the true star of *BioShock*. That might be the case, but Rapture is inseparable from its founder and *BioShock*'s antagonist, Andrew Ryan. The sprawling underwater city was built as a reflection of his vision and its inevitable downfall represents the flaws in his ideology. As a consequence, the very act of exploring Rapture serves to mythologise Andrew Ryan. As you explore Rapture, Ryan feels omnipresent; everything you learn about the city is synonymous with learning something about Ryan himself, and it only adds to the anticipation of finally coming face-to-face with the man himself.



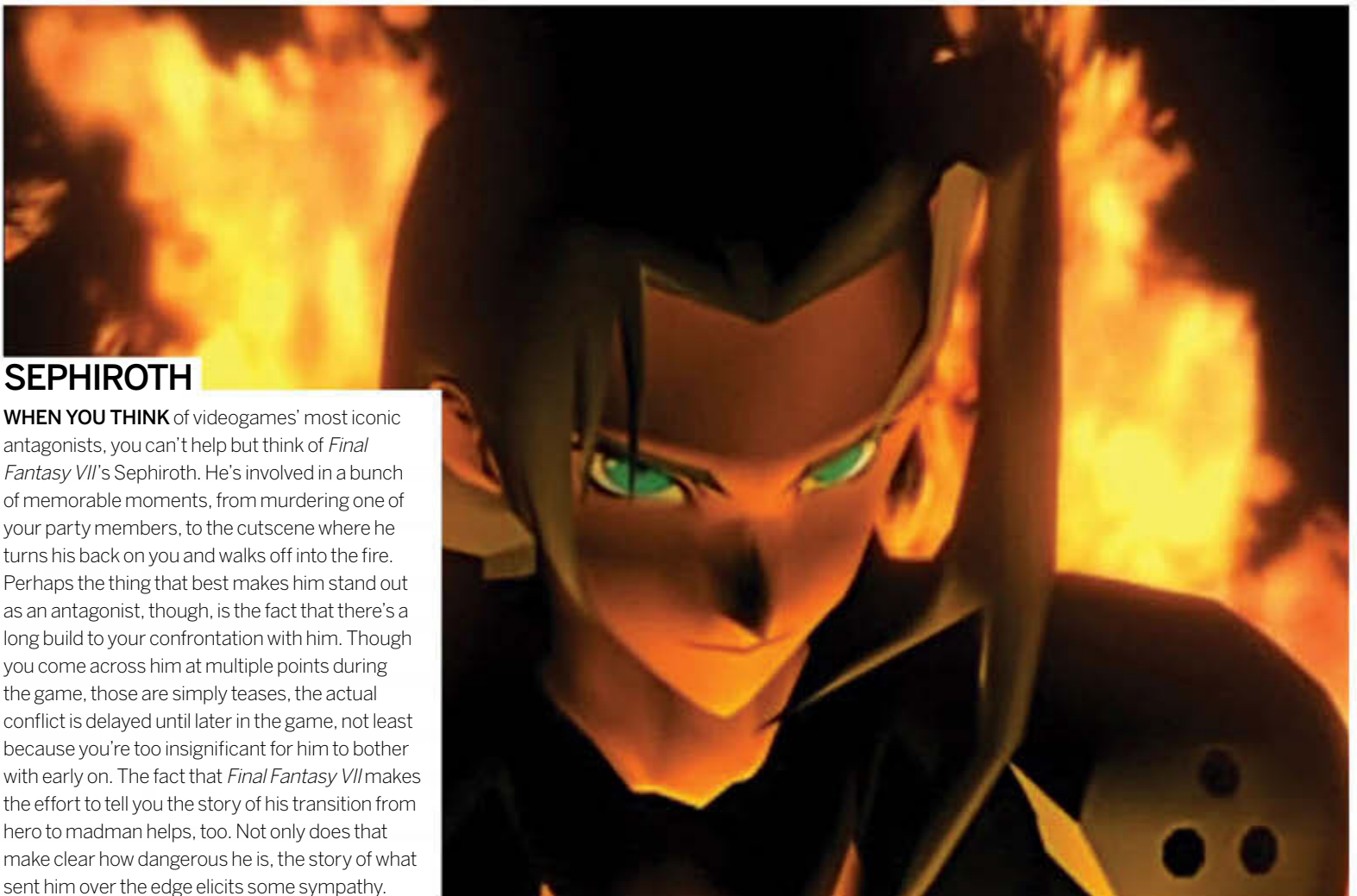
PERSONA 4'S SERIAL KILLER

DON'T WORRY, WE'RE not going to spoil *Persona 4* by revealing the identity of the serial killer you spend the whole game hunting. Indeed, the mystery of their identity is part of what makes them such a great antagonist. There's a sense that you're always one step behind the killer, though the game is great at teasing you with a number of false dawns and red herrings that give you hope that you're getting close. The killer's status as a great antagonist is enhanced by the fact that they are not only a threat to your friends, but that they make them a threat to you, turning elements of their psyches against themselves and the group.



LIQUID SNAKE/ REVOLVER OCELOT/ LIQUID OCELOT

PERHAPS ONE OF the reasons Liquid Ocelot stands out as one of videogames' greatest antagonists is because of his constant presence throughout the *Metal Gear Solid* series – in fact, he is the only character who appears in every mainline *Metal Gear Solid* game. That consistency builds his legend as a fighter and his status as a rival, ultimately culminating in an epic fist fight atop a massive battleship in *Metal Gear Solid 4* in which we're taken on a nostalgia-fueled trip through *Metal Gear* history. Then there is the mystique of the man, created by the fact that you're never quite sure where his loyalties really lie...



SEPHIROTH

WHEN YOU THINK of videogames' most iconic antagonists, you can't help but think of *Final Fantasy VII*'s Sephiroth. He's involved in a bunch of memorable moments, from murdering one of your party members, to the cutscene where he turns his back on you and walks off into the fire. Perhaps the thing that best makes him stand out as an antagonist, though, is the fact that there's a long build to your confrontation with him. Though you come across him at multiple points during the game, those are simply teases, the actual conflict is delayed until later in the game, not least because you're too insignificant for him to bother with early on. The fact that *Final Fantasy VII* makes the effort to tell you the story of his transition from hero to madman helps, too. Not only does that make clear how dangerous he is, the story of what sent him over the edge elicits some sympathy.

ACHIEVE VICTORY IN DARK SOULS II

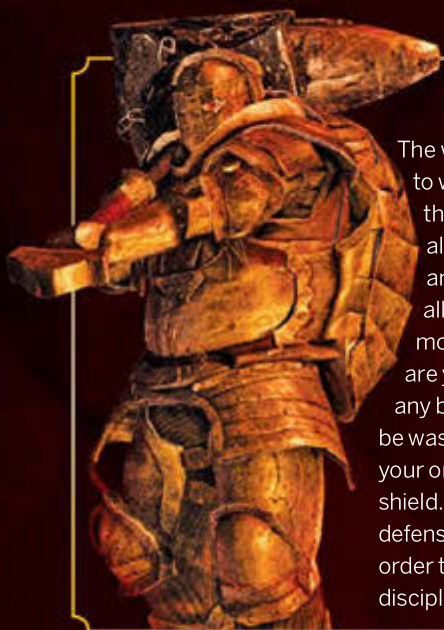
With Scholar Of The First Sin ready to invade PS4, we sent our veterans on a quest to help the newcomers to Drangleic get one up on a world that wants them dead...

UNDERSTANDING STATS & BUILDS

The stats screen of *Dark Souls II* is a daunting beast, but it's not so bad once you know what everything does. Cast your eyes over this table and you should develop a decent grasp of what it all means. Most attributes offer many benefits on leveling, as you'll see by just pressing right on them when cashing in Souls

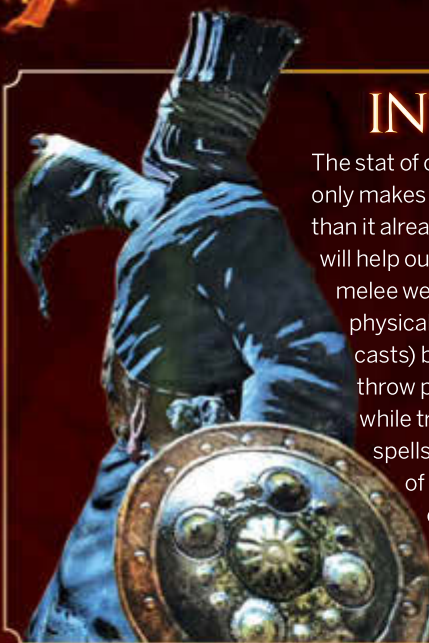
to level up. Increasing STR, DEX, INT and FTH allows you to equip better gear, but it also increases your basic attack value based on the scaling of equipment – a scaling grade of E offers a modest boost while S can give a huge boost. Do not underestimate the importance of AGL, either. Get it to 114 and you've got triple the default invulnerability on your dodge roll.

ATTRIBUTE	STAT BOOSTED	VALUES PER POINT SPENT
VGR (VIGOR)	HP	(1-20) +30HP, (21-50) +20HP, (51-99) +5HP
END (ENDURANCE)	STAMINA	(1-20) +2 STAMINA, (21-99) +1 STAMINA
VIT (VITALITY)	EQUIP LOAD	(1-29) +15 EQUIP LOAD, (30-49) +1 EQUIP LOAD, (50-70) +0.5 EQUIP LOAD, (71-99) +0.25 EQUIP LOAD
ATN (ATTUNEMENT)	SLOT	EXTRA SPELLS SLOTS AT ATN 10, 13, 16, 20, 25, 30, 40, 50, 60, AND 75
STR (STRENGTH)	ATK: STR	VARIABLE (DIMINISHING RETURNS BEGIN AROUND 40-50)
DEX (DEXTERITY)	ATK: DEX	VARIABLE (DIMINISHING RETURNS BEGIN AROUND 40-50)
ADP (ADAPTABILITY)	AGL (AGILITY)	VARIABLE (BASED ON CURRENT STAT)
INT (INTELLIGENCE)	MAGIC BNS (BONUS)	VARIABLE (DIMINISHING RETURNS BEGIN AROUND 40-50)
FTH (FAITH)	LIGHTNG BNS (LIGHTNING BONUS)	VARIABLE (DIMINISHING RETURNS BEGIN AROUND 40-50)



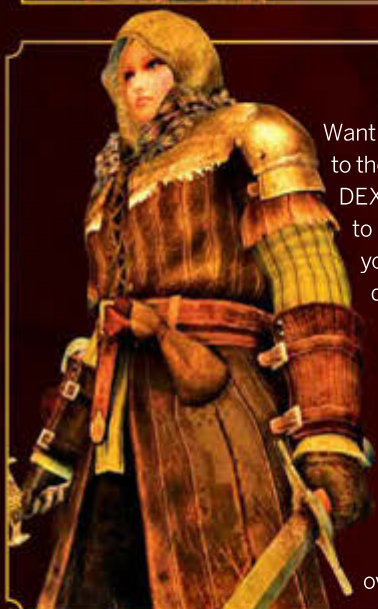
STR TANK

The way of the warrior is a tough path to walk in *Dark Souls*, but it's one of the most satisfying classes when it all comes together. Focus on STR and VIT to begin with, which will allow you to hit harder and wear more protective gear – VGR and END are your secondary concerns. As with any build, a few points in ADP will not be wasted either, as the dodge roll will be your only line of defense outside of your shield. You'll definitely hit hard, but your defensive game needs to be good in order to survive. Pyromancy is a discipline to fall back on, too.



INT CASTER

The stat of choice is in the name, which only makes this even more Easy Mode than it already is. A few points in DEX will help out with a fallback (a small melee weapon in case you need to get physical when running low on spell casts) but generally speaking, just throw points at INT, ATN and END while trying to track down more spells. That's the hardest part of a caster's journey – melee characters start out with a full arsenal, but mages must sniff out additional spells in order to be effective.



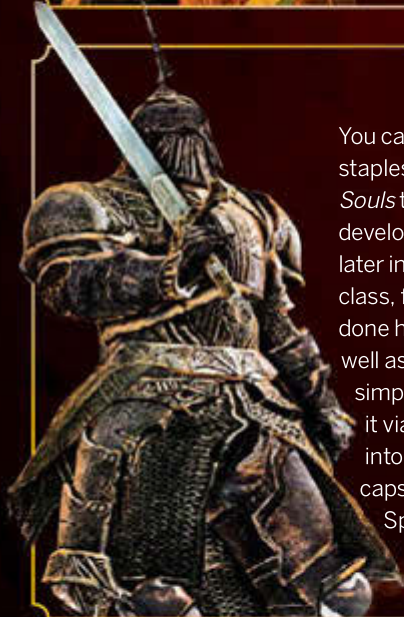
DEX MELEE

Want to be a badass ninja? You've come to the right place. Pour points into DEX, END and ADP and you'll be able to leap around all over the place – you may be more fragile but that doesn't matter if you're not being hit. Katanas, daggers and other complex melee weapons work best here, although you'll need a few points in VIT (to keep under 70 per cent Equip Load for the faster roll) and VGR (to not die in one hit) as well. Mobility is your bread and butter, which also makes damage-over-time status effects useful.



FTH CASTER

There's a clue here as to which stat should be the focus. But again, it takes so long to develop your Miracles that we'd recommend this as a post-game pursuit. Those of the Faith discipline eventually get a bunch of crazy buffs and heals, making them a great support class for co-op play. It's not the best build for solo adventuring but as one of the few resource-free healers in the game, you can't help but love a good FTH build.



HYBRID

You can basically fuse any classic RPG staples into one character in *Dark Souls* thanks to its free-form character development, but this is best saved for later in the game. The Cleric starting class, for instance, shows what can be done here – a strong melee game as well as healing and buffs – but there are simply too many stats to grow to make it viable early on. When you get further into the game and start hitting soft caps on your stats, Clerics (STR/FTH), Spellswords (INT/DEX) and other combinations start to find far better footing.



MIXED CASTER

The third school of magic, Hexes, requires a relatively even split between INT and FTH, making it something that's better to jump into later in the game rather than early on where every stat point really matters. With their own lineup of brutal Hex spells as well as access to the lower tiers of both Miracles and Sorceries, decent mixed casters can basically do as they please. As well as being versatile for PvE play, they're also rather unpredictable in PvP, making them very dangerous spell-slingers later on into the game.

HOLD BACK



The areas that were added as DLC for the PS3 version are tough as nails, so we recommend you avoid Shulva, Brume Tower and Frozen Eleum Loyce until you at least have the four Great Souls. By that point, you should (hopefully) have the gear and the skills to attempt them – the enemies in each pack one hell of a punch.

CARRY SPARES



All it takes is a few more enemies than you expect and you could be looking at your favourite weapon breaking during combat. A weaker or equivalent (or identical, ideally) backup weapon will avoid such concerns, as repairs don't come cheap in this horrible world. Always be prepared for your primary weapon to break – you'll be glad you were.

DON'T JUMP!



The well in Majula looks so inviting, doesn't it? Don't do it! Until you either have enough HP through levelling up and/or the Silvercat Ring to reduce fall damage, you'll never make it. Nor would you want to – by the time you have enough health to get down the pit, you should hopefully be ready to deal with its residents. Spoiler: they don't play nice.

BURN IT



You can face Mytha at Earthen Peak in a sea of poison if you want, but there's a simpler way. On the way to her chamber (in the room where bad dudes drop from above), there's a windmill that can be set alight by bringing a torch from the bonfire nearby. Do this and the poison will drain from the arena, making the fight significantly easier.

CHEAT DEATH

Eight handy hints that should help keep your Souls safe as you wander the horrible world of Drangleic

GET PROTECTED



Later on in the game, when you're dealing in stupid amounts of Souls, the Ring Of Life Protection is a blessing. Equip it and you'll retain both your humanity and Souls on death in exchange for the ring breaking – the repair cost of 3,000 Souls is a small price to pay if it allows you to retain more Souls. This can be obtained as early as No-Man's Wharf.

BE PREPARED



You *will* get invaded at some point, whether it's while snooping around the bell towers, venturing into rat territory (the two most likely examples) or just out in the wilds. Having a decent arsenal will help deal with invaders, from melee tanks to cheeky long-range casters. Unless you're playing offline, you need to be ready for *anything*.

BONFIRE BLUES



Burning a Bonfire Ascetic will reset chests and items in a region, but it will also raise the enemy difficulty to the next New Game+ level. It's a neat way to score rare items but you can expect tougher enemies if you choose to walk this path, especially if you plan on venturing into NG+ yourself. Easier in the short term, harder in the long run...

GOT RANGE?

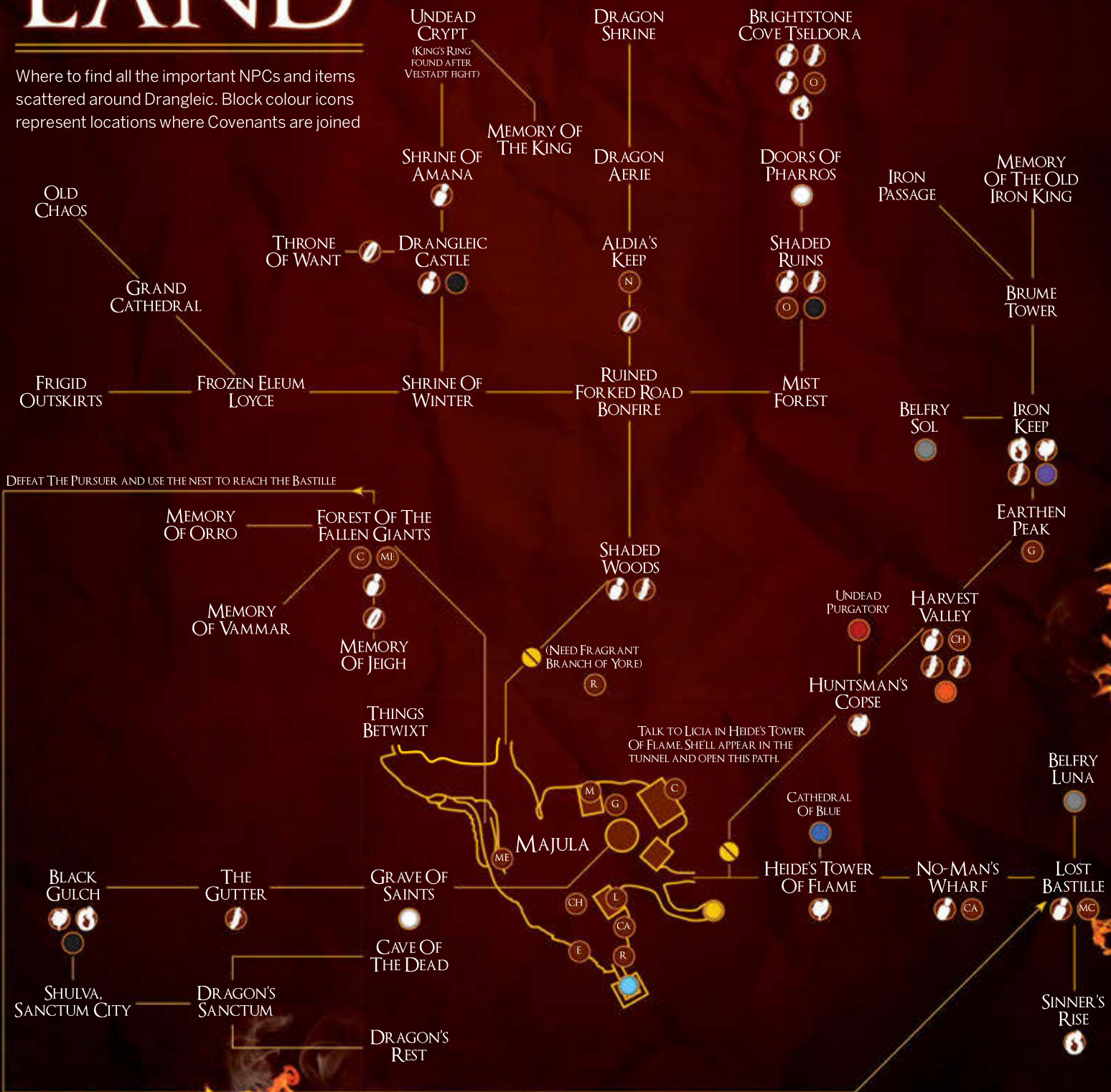


Even STR-based characters need to take a breather, and that's where ranged weapons come into play. Magic and DEX builds need little help in this regard, but tanks would do well to check out the Dragonrider Bow. It scales with STR and hits like a truck. Grab a handful of poison arrows and you can cheese your way through ANYTHING.

LAY OF THE LAND

Where to find all the important NPCs and items scattered around Drangleic. Block colour icons represent locations where Covenants are joined

C	CALE (CARTOGRAPHER)	R	ROSABETH (PYROMANCY)	MC	MCDUFF (BLACKSMITH)		ESTUS FLASK SHARD
G	GILLGIAN (LADDER MAN)	CH	CHLOANNE (TITANITE TRADER)	L	LENIGRAST (BLACKSMITH)		SUBLIME BONE DUST
ME	MELENTIA (MERCHANT)	O	ORNIFEX (BLACKSMITH)	M	MAUGHLIN (ARMOURER)		FRAGRANT BRANCH OF YORE
CA	CARHILLION (SORCERER)	E	EMERALD HERALD	N	ROYAL SORCERER NAVLAAN		GREAT SOUL
	PILGRIMS OF DARK		BROTHERHOOD OF BLOOD		BELL KEEPERS		RING DOOR
	HEIRS OF THE SUN		BLUE SENTINELS		RAT KING		DRAGON REMNANTS
	WAY OF THE BLUE						COMPANY OF CHAMPIONS



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Final Fantasy Type-0

We have arrived



DETAILS

PUBLISHER

Square Enix

DEVELOPER

HexaDrive

PSN PRICE

£39.99

PLAYERS

1

AGE RATING

16+

TWITTER

@FinalFantasy

Trophies 50



OUR FEEBLE LANGUAGE

doesn't have a word capable of succinctly describing *Type-0*. It is at once incredible and terrible, for extremely different reasons. On the one hand, the mere fact that this a PSP game running on PS4 and looking passable is a technical triumph – as with the portable *Kingdom Hearts* games featured in both HD collections, a huge amount of effort has gone into disguising the handheld heritage. But the fake moustache was always going to slip eventually, and when it does, you can't help but sit back and realise that *Type-0* is probably the worst-looking game on PS4 so far. It's to be expected, of course – the game originally released almost four years ago for a last-gen handheld, making it incredible that it even looks as good as it does. See what we mean? There's no one word for it, so it's somewhat fortunate that we get to use loads, because we're going to bloody need them.

The handheld origins of *Type-0* are evident not only from its comparatively basic visuals but also from its structure.

Sorties are somewhat brief and modular affairs, battlefields broken down into bite-size chunks in a manner that could clearly and easily have been done away with in the leap to PS4. There is a world map of sorts, but it's kind of a jigsaw puzzle of an overworld and one that isn't made any easier to navigate by the in-game maps – if you don't remember where one region ends and another begins, it can be tough to get your bearings here. Still, at least there are side-quests to remind you of what goes where, even if most are

way beyond your means during a regular playthrough. Save first (you have no idea how important this part is – the old-school save system is a far cry from the forgiving checkpoints of *XIII*) and give them a go if you are feeling particularly brave – it could just work out in your favour.

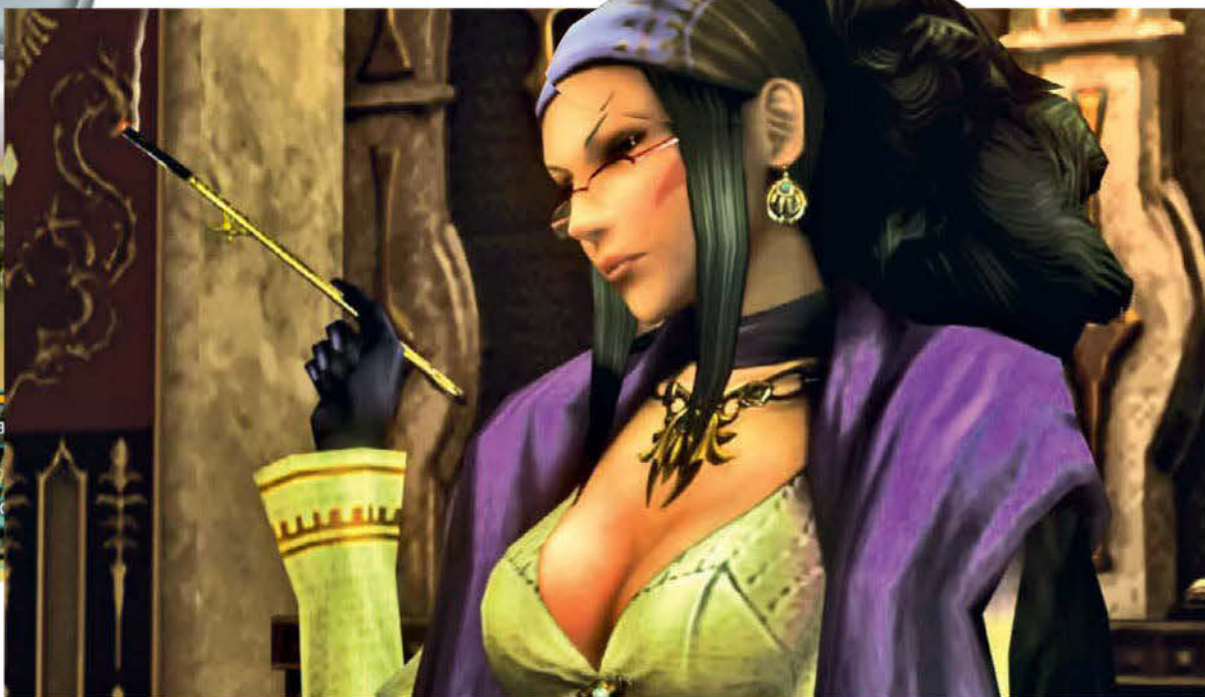


Battle maps take the form of enclosed corridors and arenas, not unlike the regions found in *Monster Hunter* and its countless portable clones. It's here that the action-centric combat takes place, and the fast-paced nature of the real-time battles means that those used to methodical menu-driven monster mashing might feel a little out of their depth at first. While combat is certainly tight, the fact that all 14 playable characters handle completely differently and some are far more beginner-friendly than others

“THIS IS NOT FINAL FANTASY AS YOU KNOW IT, BUT THAT'S CERTAINLY NOT A BAD THING”

is a mixed blessing – it's fun to experiment with each in battle, but there's absolutely no indication of which are easier to use than others. In fact, 'main character' (if you can call him that) Ace is actually one of the trickier characters to use well, as his main ability revolves around drawing cards from



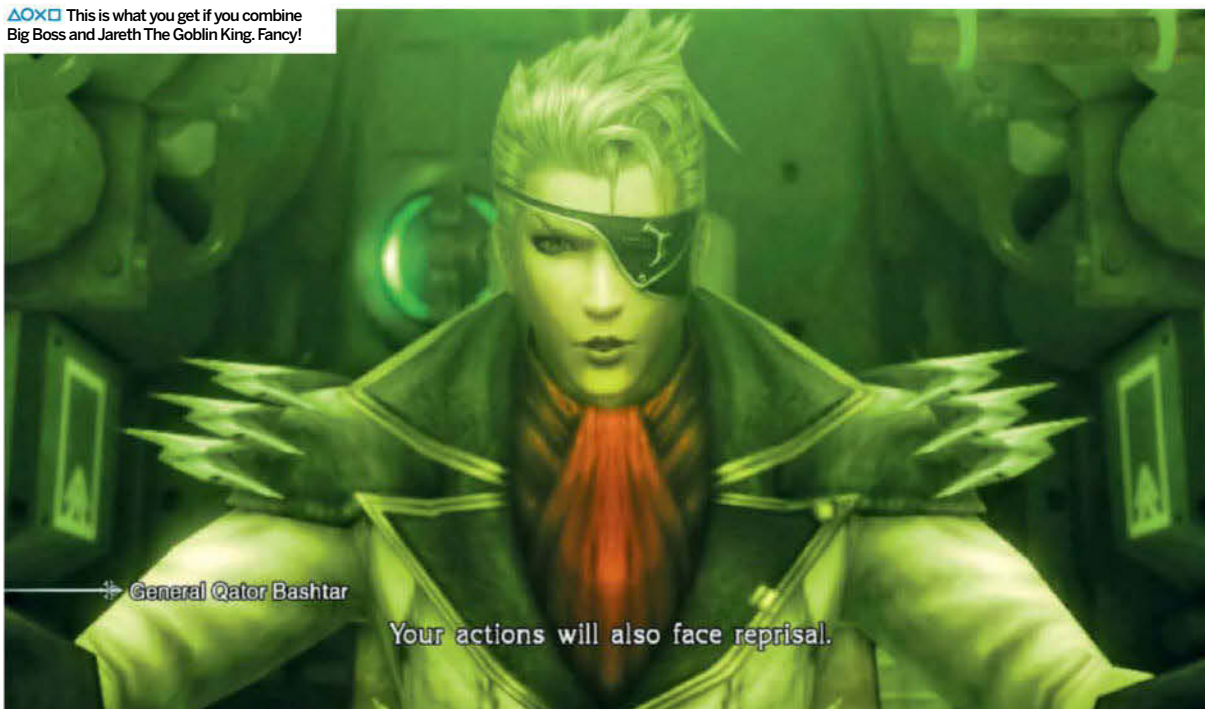


△××△ This is what you get if you combine Big Boss and Jareth The Goblin King. Fancy!

his deck (he uses playing cards as weapons, the crazy fool) and reacting to the random special moves this throws up. Each class member is characterised by their weapon of choice, which cannot be changed. But with such a wide cast and interesting range of weapons on display, you can pretty much build your three-character team based on the gear you enjoy using – spells change in effectiveness based on who is using them but that side of things is far more versatile.

Mastering the universal mechanics such as the dodge roll and chargeable magic attacks is a must, as is developing an understanding of how the new critical hit system works. Randomly hitting for more damage wouldn't make a great deal of sense in what is basically an action game, so it's been reworked to revolve around timing and placement instead. Before, during or after certain attacks, enemies will be marked and landing a hit during that brief window will trigger a Killsight attack that will straight-up murder most smaller enemies and can make a nice dent in bosses too. Slower characters will have trouble responding to this in time to exploit the weakness, meaning you instead need to learn where the windows occur in attack patterns and pre-empt them. It's a neat and satisfying system and when you get it down and clear a battlefield in seconds, you'll feel like a freaking boss. Just don't get too cocky – stupidly high level enemies roam the overworld and will mess you up in seconds, but these are easy enough to spot as regular enemies appear through random encounters. If you can see the monster before the fight starts, you don't have a chance, basically. Run the hell away.

Should you fall in battle, though, at least you have a queue of other students waiting to leap from the reserves line and into the



action. This process is a little on the fiddly side – as with other aspects of button mapping, you can tell this was originally designed for a controller with fewer buttons than the DualShock 4 has. The fact that bosses and other powerful enemies can often make short work of even your most powerful characters makes equally levelling your entire crew pretty crucial to success. You can get away with having a few stragglers tag along at lower levels (not all missions allow you to bring the entire roster, after all) but you'll be kicking yourself if your last hope is ten rungs below the recommended level. You can abort missions that seem destined to fail, mind, and you will keep any experience



CLASS OF 2011 Meet Akademia's finest students

QUEEN

Weapon: Sword

If you're looking for an all-rounder, Queen is a solid choice. Like Jack, she's not exactly interesting (at least she's more memorable than him outside of combat) but she's effective.

NINE

Weapon: Lance

Decent range and great power make Nine one of the easier characters to play. He's an idiot jock who can't stop saying 'yo' and 'hey' at stupid times, but he gets the job done. Can't argue with that, yo.

TREY

Weapon: Bow

With his slow, long-ranged attacks, Trey doesn't seem all that great at first. Then you unlock an ability that can paint an area with a Killsight effect, and you'll never want him to leave your side. A solid support.



SICE

Weapon: Scythe

As with most scythe-wielding characters, Sice is something of a tricky beast. We didn't really get on with her (she's no Zasalame!), but don't let that stop you trying her out for yourself.

SEVEN

Weapon: Whip sword

She might look like a budget Lightning, but the fact that she has The Coolest Weapon In All Of Gaming (borrowed from *SoulCalibur's* Ivy) pretty much makes up for it. Not easy to use well, mind.

EIGHT

Weapon: Knuckles

You've got to respect a feisty little bugger with the audacity to just run up to things and punch them repeatedly. His can-do anime attitude can get a bit much at times, but the kids has balls.

JACK

Weapon: Katana

We'll be honest: we forgot Jack even existed until it came to writing this. He's just a forgettable character and even though he's actually the strongest of the lot, he's also really slow. And boring. Screw that guy.

KING

Weapon: Twin pistols

This dude is a badass. That's all there is to it. Bullets aren't as quick as you might expect, but once you get used to that, his ranged attacks let you dish out decent damage from a pretty safe distance.

ACE

Weapon: Cards

Oddly, 'hero' Ace is actually one of the weaker characters in terms of voicing. Good thing he's fun to play, then – the random nature of his cards will keep you on your toes. Believe in the Heart Of The Cards!

CINQUE

Weapon: Mace

Few characters come close to this squeaky menace in terms of raw attack power, though she'll likely do as much damage to your ears and sanity as she does to enemies. Slow but brutal, she's one for skilled players.

CATER

Weapon: Magicite Pistol

Range, speed and power? Go on then. Cater's pistol can be upgraded to charge up powerful blows when it isn't being fired, which is really handy. She's probably slightly better than King overall, but less badass.

DEUCE

Weapon: Flute

We've always had a soft spot for characters who use musical instruments as weapons (hello, *Dynasty Warriors*), and Deuce is no exception. She's a beast with magic too, making her great for support.



DOXD Objection! Rumours of a courtroom mini-game have yet to be confirmed...

"THOSE USED TO METHODOICAL MENU-DRIVEN MONSTER MASHING MIGHT FEEL A LITTLE OUT OF THEIR DEPTH AT FIRST"

accrued – knowing when to pull the plug is especially important considering that the alternative involves an enforced one way trip to the title screen.

Between missions, you're free to roam the Akademia campus and overworld, but you only have a limited amount of time to spend socialising and grinding before you're called back into service. This creates a *Persona*-lite time management meta-game – chatting to highlighted characters takes two hours while leaving the school costs six, no matter how long you're actually out for. As such, it makes sense to take full advantage of any time spent in the field, as you can easily gain a few levels dealing with enemies and doing

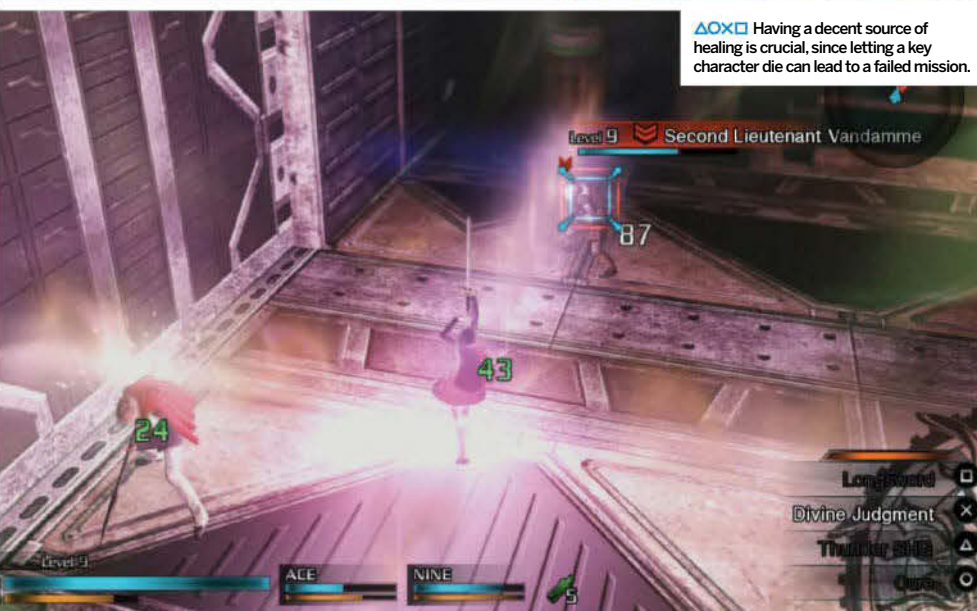
various tasks for NPCs in any friendly towns and cities rather than using up half a day just to run a quick errand. This system actually presents some pretty interesting dilemmas – one section in particular limits free time so much that it makes you choose between fraternising solely with your team, speaking exclusively to the locals to understand more about how your class (and nation) is perceived or splitting your time between both and not getting the full picture on either side. While nowhere near as developed as *Persona's* Social Link system, it's certainly an interesting way of giving players the choice of doing, seeing and learning about the things they're most interested in.



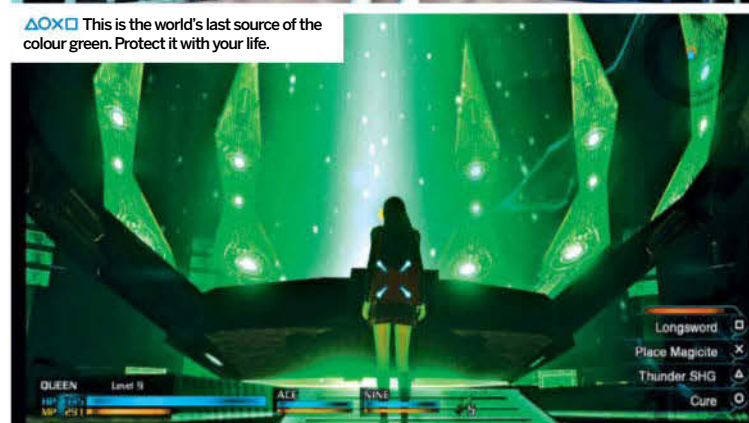
△×□ Tactical RTS battles look pretty nasty, but the good news is that they're at least interesting.



△×□ Having a decent source of healing is crucial, since letting a key character die can lead to a failed mission.



△×□ This is the world's last source of the colour green. Protect it with your life.



On a narrative level, the tale of warring states starts small but quickly escalates to the predictable world-in-jeopardy fare, although it is fairly well handled. It's also way darker in tone than any other *Final Fantasy* to date – it is a fitting appetiser for *XV* in that respect and allows certain scenes to shock and surprise far more than they might in a different game, purely because they are largely without precedent within *Final Fantasy* canon.

Classmate development is slow and steady, with a lot of the emphasis placed on Class Zero newcomers Rem and Machina – you can tell they're outsiders because their names don't fit with the playing card theme like everyone else's. It's quite refreshing that there isn't one lead hero being followed around by a bunch of other adventurers, and you can sort of shift the emphasis of the story (to a minor degree, at least – even the

illusion of freedom here is welcome, though) based on who you chat with and when.

If you can put aside that it doesn't look like a PS4 game and often feels dangerously like the handheld game we all know it once was, *Type-0* is really quite good. It's a more successful evolution of the series' combat into the action field than any of the *XIII* saga games were in many ways and although it doesn't really look or feel like a typical *Final Fantasy* games, the lore, familiar elements and general quality do enough to ensure that it doesn't feel too out of place within the series. It's obvious that we're late to the party with this – several elements have been iterated and improved upon by more recent games since the original 2011 release – but it never feels truly dated, just not *quite* up to the standards of the genre's very best. Its handheld origins haunt it throughout, though you're likely to get to absorbed by

the interesting story and world and the surprisingly tight action combat to care too much about that after the first few hours.

Whether you pick this up to finally sample a lost game in the biggest RPG series going, or you only get it because it comes free with a really expensive *FFXV* demo, we wager you'll be pleasantly surprised. This is not *Final Fantasy* as you know it, but that's certainly not a bad thing.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

Solid combat, a varied cast and an interesting story make up for the fact that its HD makeover can't hide that this was once a PSP game. It may not look like one, but *Type-0* is a great PS4 game.

81%

Hotline Miami 2: Wrong Number

Do we still like hurting people?



DETAILS

PUBLISHER

Devolver Digital

DEVELOPER

Dennaton Games

PSN PRICE

£10.99

PLAYERS

1

INSTALL SIZE

434 MB

AGE RATING

18+

TWITTER

@HotlineMiami

Trophies 29



THE FORMULA

ESTABLISHED in the first game – comprised of exhilarating twitch action, a near trance-inducing

banger of a soundtrack and neon soaked, Eighties-inspired visuals – had us confident that *Hotline Miami 2* would be brilliant, but we did have one notable concern. That is that the sequel would try to repeat what its predecessor did with its smart and self-reflexive story, in the process transforming something that was innovative and fresh into the empty performance of a one-trick pony.

Indeed, there is a moment early on that might lead you to think that the game is trying too hard, in this particular instance to shock us. It's a scene that is undeniably effective in creating a sense of disgust and unease in the player, but

there's an argument to be made that it is unnecessarily exploitative.

Putting that aside, as time progresses, you realise that *Wrong Number* is not a rehash and is quite different to its predecessor, particularly in the way that it's structured. Its story is far less focused; perhaps it could even be argued that it lacks the clarity of vision of the original. However, the game's storytelling has a schizophrenic quality that fits with *Hotline*

"IT'S A BIT LIKE PLAYING AN ULTRA-VIOLENT TONY HAWK'S, GRADUALLY REFINING YOUR RUNS WITH QUICK RESTARTS"

Miami's surreal, hallucinogenic tone. Like a film that's been cut together by a mind in the midst of an acid trip, *Wrong Number* confuses us with competing realities, unexpectedly cuts narrative threads short, jumps between different

characters and time periods with reckless abandon. It is sprawling and dreamlike in a way that not only feels stylistically appropriate, but that encourages you to mull it over from different perspectives. It occasionally feels confusing but that doesn't make it any less interesting.

When it comes to the action, things are far more familiar. That lightning quick brand of thrilling, one-hit, one-kill, top-down murder remains intact, meaning

that clearing out floors of enemies is as intense, challenging and rewarding as it ever was. For those of you who haven't had the pleasure of playing the original,

it's a bit like playing an ultra-violent *Tony Hawk's*, gradually refining your runs with quick restarts as you seek to combo your way through a level. That exhilarating experience is enhanced by a killer soundtrack that's a worthy follow-up to one of the greatest in gaming history. We'd prefer the game didn't also have the bugs the original had on release, but there are a few minor ones to be ironed out.

Where *Hotline Miami 2* differs is that the roster of masks that your killer can wear to bestow them with special abilities has been cut back. In truth, many of the masks in the first game weren't all that interesting, and most people ended up sticking to the frog mask when chasing high scores anyway. *Wrong Number* sacrifices volume to present us with a handful of abilities that are far more diverse. One character, for example, has





Unlike the first game, you can't chain throws into combos, but it does have dual wielding mechanics – *Hotline Miami* giveth and *Hotline Miami* taketh away.



a dodge roll, allowing you to close the gap on enemies with guns as you duck their gunfire. Another functions as a duo that you control simultaneously, one wielding a chainsaw and one a gun, allowing to use melee and gunfire simultaneously. These special abilities have a far more significant impact on the way you play, forcing you to think about how they can change the way you tackle a level. It's this change more than anything else that elevates *Hotline Miami 2* to being something more than a collection of new stages. We suspect that the new spin these abilities offer will make the long game of score chasing all the better too, as we experiment with how each ability can help us one-up friends on the game's leaderboards.

Indeed, we expect to be chasing those scores right into the distant future because, like the first entry, *Wrong Number* is a game that gets under your skin like few others. Excelling in so many aspects, from its eye-popping visual style and electronic soundtrack, through to its perfectly balanced twin-stick action and smart, surprising story, *Wrong Number* lives up to the legacy of the original. We'd go so far as to say it's essential.

Paul Walker-Emig

VERDICT

We'd have been content with a game that was essentially more *Hotline Miami* levels.

This sequel retains many of the best aspects of the original, it is far more than that.

93%

PICK YOUR POISON

There's a new range of psychopathic characters to choose from in *Hotline Miami 2*, each with a unique ability



TONY

Similar to the tiger mask in the first *Hotline Miami* game, Tony has lethal punches. However, he is unable to pick up any weapons.



COREY

This character has a dodge roll that can be used to avoid gunfire, allowing you to rapidly (and safely) close the distance on firearm-toting foes.



ALEX & ASH

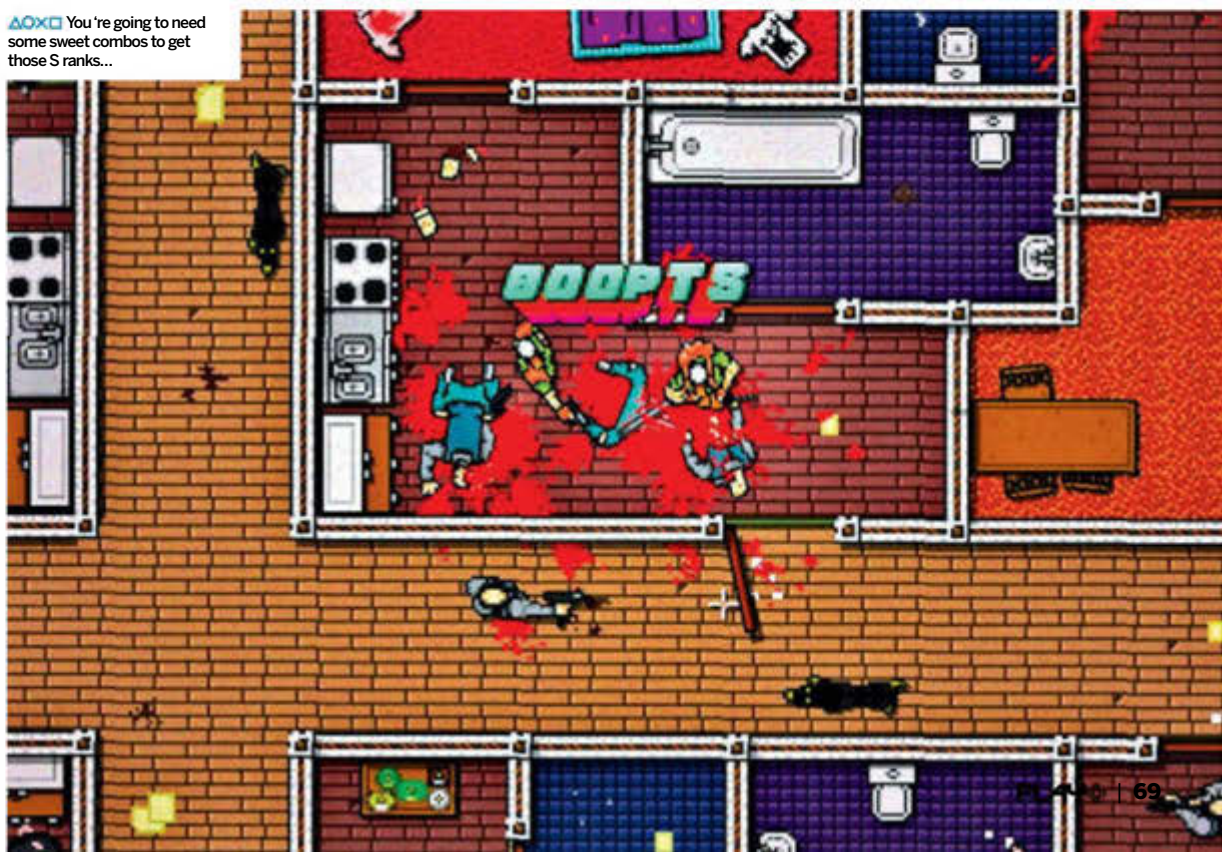
These characters come as a pair. The former wields a chainsaw while the latter uses firearms, allowing you to blend melee and gun-based combat.



MARK

This chap starts levels with two Uzis. You can open up Mark's arms in order to spread fire. Once his ammo is gone, he uses weapons as normal.

You're going to need some sweet combos to get those S ranks...





AOXO The fighting system is fun for a while, but it becomes clear that it's a hollow system designed for mindless button-mashing.



AOXO *Xenoverse* is pure fan service, taking players through the series' biggest battles and moments.

Dragon Ball Xenoverse

Our enjoyment levels are firmly under 9,000



ALSO ON PS3

IN MANY RESPECTS,

Dragon Ball Xenoverse is the perfect digital adaptation of Akira

Toriyama's original works:

it features battles of huge visual intensity and bombast, undercut by tiresome filler that'll have your attention span waning within hours. That's not a dig at the source material, though, with hindsight, we can all agree that 177 days spent running along Snake Way was a little excessive, right, Goku? However, it's clear that Dimpz hasn't utilised the power of the PS4 appropriately, nor has it tried to adapt its aging core systems and mechanics to help the fighter transform in a new generation.

To be frank, none of this will really matter if you're the sort of diehard fan that'll happily spend a weekend debating the legitimacy of *Dragon Ball Z Kai* versus the original series. *Xenoverse* is a *Dragon Ball Z* fan's wet dream, allowing

you to create your own character, link up with Trunks, and join the Time Patrol Team in an effort to stop history from unravelling. Over the years, we've spent plenty of time embodying Earth's mightiest heroes – always to stop an ever-encroaching evil whose destiny has already been written, drawn and animated – but this is the first time we truly feel like we're having an impact on the mythos. Across a 15-hour campaign, you'll be given the opportunity to venture to integral moments throughout the storied *DBZ* timeline in an effort to set history back on its intended course.

We say *feel* like you're having an impact because, of course, you aren't. While it's fun to see what might have happened should Raditz have avoided Piccolo's ridiculously-slow-to-charge Special Beam Cannon, failure to align with the canon history results in a game over screen as opposed to a zany 'What If?' scenario. That doesn't dilute the

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Bandai Namco

DEVELOPER
Dimpz

PSN PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1-6

INSTALL SIZE
9.4 GB

AGE RATING
12

TWITTER
@bandainamcok

Trophies 50



FOR FANS OF...

DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI TENKAICHI 3 While it isn't better than *Budokai Tenkaichi 3*, *Xenoverse* is competent enough that you can finally put your PS2 away for good.

“XENOVERSE IS A VERY SIMPLISTIC FIGHTING GAME THAT WILL STRUGGLE TO HOLD ATTENTION PAST THE INITIAL VISUAL SPLENDOUR”



ΔOXO *Dragon Ball: Xenoverse* looks to impress with its visually accurate characters and world, though it lacks any depth past an initial glance.

entire experience, mind – it just feels like Dimps could have gone further with *XenoVerse* to take advantage of the alternate-history opportunity. While many fans will walk away feeling satisfied at playing a part in *DBZ*'s biggest battles, some will wonder why Trunks didn't just gather the bloody Dragon Balls himself and wish the timeline fixed in the first place.

Still, if the story does begin to drag, there's plenty else to see and do to keep you occupied. The MMORPG-style hub world, Toki Toki City, is a confusing mess, though its surprisingly interesting to explore. It's here where you'll be able to access the 11 Sagas that make up *XenoVerse*'s story mode, a

deluge of side-quests, training missions with iconic *Dragon Ball* legends, and interesting ways to experience split-screen and online multiplayer battles. It's also here where you'll be able to view other custom-created characters. Dimps has adapted the character design system from 2010's *Dragon Ball Online*, giving you the opportunity to craft your own Earthling, Saiyan or Arcosian, with their own physical attributes and custom fighting style. Throughout the game, you'll also be able to level up your character, adding new skills and moves to their repertoire. It is a basic, but functional, system – though it lacks any solid depth.

That isn't a surprise, because it's the same problem that plagues the combat system. Once you're done drowning in fan service, you'll very quickly come to realise that *XenoVerse* is essentially a very simplistic fighting game that will struggle to hold attention past the initial visual splendour. Battles lack any real weight or impact, while those looking for technical depth will be left sorely disappointed. *XenoVerse* quickly descends into a button-mashing paradise, where no amount of Kamehamehas, Ki Blasts or Spirit Bombs can help drag the entertainment out of the ground. Fighters will also

desperately struggle to overcome an invasive camera, not to mention shoddy AI that borderlines on murderously frustrating. *XenoVerse* has more in common with *Dragon Ball Online* than *Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 3* in this respect, it isn't a straight up one-on-one brawler. Truth be told, anyone outside of the horrifically dedicated core fanbase will find very little to enjoy here.

At times, it feels like *XenoVerse* is on the cusp of dragging the series into the next generation. The MMORPG hub-style world is a gentle step towards it, but the exclusion of destructible environments is just tiring at this point. A shallow combat system and meandering filler between main missions left our attention spans feeling like Krillin in every battle ever: unwarranted, wasted and desperately awaiting a *Dragon Ball* revival.

Josh West

VERDICT

The PS4 is more than capable of delivering a great *Dragon Ball* game, but Dimps wasn't up to the challenge. Fan service galore can't save this one from mediocrity.

54%



RAINBOWS FORM IN YOUR EYES
Maximize your friendship levels with all Dragon Ball masters for this Silver Trophy.



THE BEST MIRACLE OF THE WORLD
You've got to hunt down and collect all seven Dragon Balls if you want to summon the mighty dragon, Shenron.

REVIEW ROUND-UP

WE'VE BEEN VERY pleasantly surprised by **HELLDIVERS [A]**. Its drab looks had primed us to expect a rather boring twin-stick shooter, but, as it turns out, it's a great co-op game with a *Starship Troopers*-inspired sense of humour and some really interesting ideas. Each mission you tackle is based around completing a number of objectives, before getting to the extraction point and calling in your ship to escape. To aid you, you've got a series of 'stratagems' to be deployed alongside your arsenal of weapons. You can, for example, call in turrets, airstrikes, more powerful weapons, ammo drops and even mechs, to help you take an objective or hold your ground. You call each in by inputting a unique code of button presses on the DualShock's D-pad, which is strangely satisfying. The game's got some other cool ideas too, such as how every mission you complete contributes to the efforts being made by other online players as

you progress towards an invasion of the enemy homeworld. Played in four player co-op, *Helldivers* is a great deal of fun, particularly when you find yourselves holding out together, all chucking out stratagems and helping each other to their feet when they go down. The fact that the game is Cross-Buy on PS4, PS3 and Vita only makes it more appealing.

If *Helldivers* is a game that might mislead you with its rather dull visual style, then **FLAME OVER [B]** is one that might

do that with its colourful and cartoony look. Do not be fooled, this game is bloody hard. Your objective is to move throughout procedurally generated environments as the clock counts down, putting out



“HELLDIVERS IS A GREAT DEAL OF FUN, PARTICULARLY WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELVES HOLDING OUT TOGETHER”

fires and saving civilians or cats in order to gain yourself more time and health respectively. At first, you'll probably find yourself dying very quickly. Allow yourself a few runs to get used to it, though, and you'll start to enjoy the act of firefighting as you try to get through the game's four stages. Granted, it can be a little unclear as to what's going on in the game's more chaotic moments, but this is a minor complaint about a game that will be enjoyed by those Vita owners among you who enjoy a good roguelike.

From one hard Vita game to another, **LA-MULANA EX [C]** is a retro-inspired 2D platformer where you play as an Indiana Jones-like adventurer, whip and all, investigating an old ruin. The game has Metroidvania elements in



ΔΟΧΔ *Helldivers* is surprisingly fun. We like the mechanic where you input cheat code-like sequences in order to call in some essential supply drops,

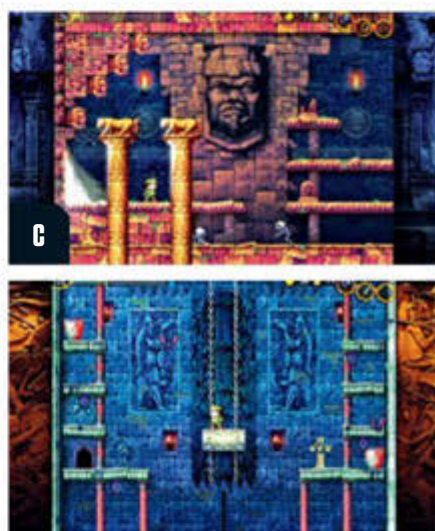




ΔOXD This moustached little fella is vulnerable in situations like this – it's time to get out of Dodge.

that you can gain abilities as you explore the environment that will allow you to reach new areas. Beware that there's no set path to get to the end, nor any signposting to speak of. This lack of direction can be frustrating, but it's there intentionally, to add to the game's difficulty and to place discovery in your hands. Whether you will like *La-Mulana* or not depends on your own sensibilities. If you want something that's completely old-school in the way it plays and is structured, then it should do you well. For most players, though, *La-Mulana* will simply be far too obtuse and casually brutal to hook them in.

It would seem difficulty is becoming something of a theme here, because **SCRAM KITTY DX [D]** is another game that takes a while to get a handle on. That's at least in part because the game is quite unlike anything else – that makes it incredibly difficult to describe, but we'll give it a shot. Your character is attached to a rail that runs around a level. You can scoot around on that rail as well as launching yourself from it to land on other rails. The point of gravity will always change to the rail that your on, meaning you can sometimes use it as an anchor point from which to spin yourself off into the distance. The point of each level is to rescue cats scattered around them. Each requires you to do something different to



save it. One will send you on a relay race around the stage, another requires you to defeat a boss-like creature, to give you a couple of examples. If we are honest, it's not a formula we found particularly compelling. Our lack of enthusiasm for *Scram Kitty DX* is exacerbated by the fact that it's unnecessarily obscure when it comes to directing you as to how to play the game in the first place. Some games draw something valuable from the act of making you discover things for yourself; this one definitely doesn't. Part of the difficulty we had clicking with the game is likely down to the fact that its originality ultimately makes it unintuitive. If you put in the time to master it, we suspect there could be something there, but we struggled to find it.



ΔOXD Yes, it is as bizarre as it looks. That means you'll have to give yourself time to get your head around *Scram Kitty*'s idiosyncrasies.

ΔOXD *Starwhal* has a handful of different game modes, but for our money, the classic one is definitely the most fun.

In contrast, a game that is almost instantly gratifying is **STARWHAL [E]**, that is, provided you've got some friends around to play it with you. You *can* stick AI competitors into the mix, but this game is meant for local multiplayer. Each of up to four players controls a horned Starwhal and has to try and pierce the hearts of their competitors in order to take their lives and be left as the last one standing. Flopping around the level, twisting and turning about each other to try and gain the advantage, elicits smiles and laughs from the get go. As well as this, a brilliant slow-motion mechanic that kicks in when you get close to a heart always gets competitors on the edge of their seats, emitting the kinds of noises you'll hear at a football stadium as a player moves in on goal, narrow escapes getting the same response you'll hear for a shot sent narrowly wide. If you want a game to play with friends locally, then look no further.





The Making Of... OUTRUN 2006 COAST 2 COAST

Sumo Digital had the unenviable task of not only porting a high-end arcade game to the PS2 and PSP, but also adding exciting new content. Fortunately for gamers, the developer was more than up to the challenge. Darran Jones speaks to Sumo Digital's executive producer Steve Lycett about the whole crazy ride

PUBLISHER SEGA

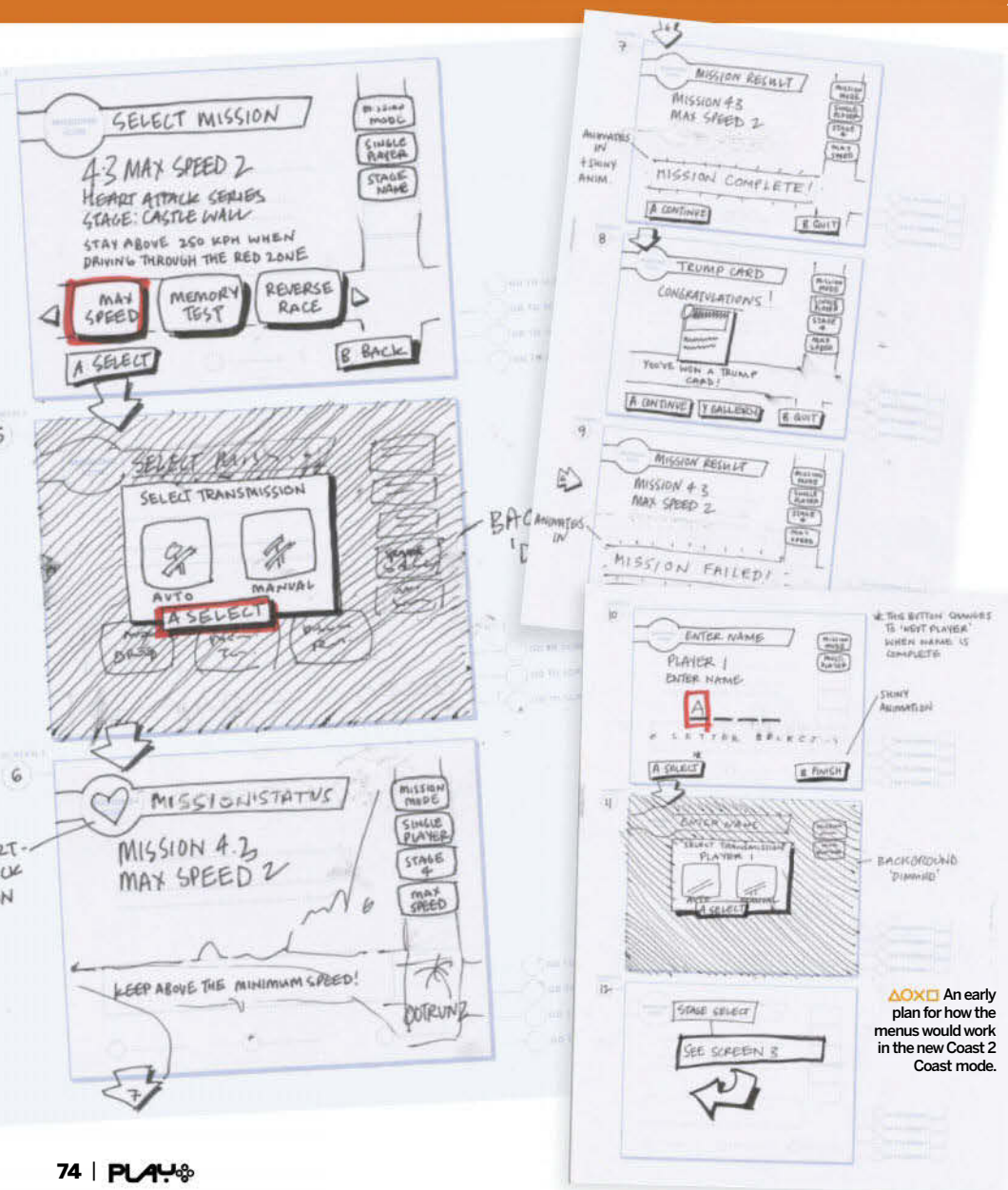
DEVELOPER SUMO DIGITAL

FORMAT PS2/PSP

RELEASE DATE 31 MARCH 2006

PLAY SCORE 91%

METACRITIC SCORE 81/100



It took Sega 17 years before it released a sequel it felt was a worthy follow-up to its smash arcade hit

OutRun. A huge deal in the arcades, PlayStation owners were suitably irked when it was revealed by Sega that the stunning-looking racer would become an Xbox exclusive. While it was a big coup for Xbox owners, the decision almost ruined any chance for a sequel, as Sumo Digital's Steve Lycett reveals.

"We'd finished *OutRun 2* on the original Xbox and whilst it was critically received, with great reviews across the board, commercially it didn't hit the sales numbers Sega were hoping for." Sumo Digital was convinced the game needed to find a larger audience, and when Sega released *OutRun 2: SP*, a sequel with a USA-themed track set, Sumo saw its opportunity and once again approached Sega. "We suggested the extra console platforms as a way of expanding the potential audience," continues Lycett, revealing how Sumo's sequel hit both PSP and PS2. "We were confident we could take the game over to PS2 and PSP intact, having had a fair bit of experience working with the PSP on *TOCA Race Driver 2* and *Virtua Tennis World Tour*. Agreeing with this as a solution, Sega asked us to round the platforms out with a PC version too."

Sega may have liked the idea of expanding *OutRun 2*'s reach, but the original development team who had created both *OutRun 2* and *SP* needed a lot more convincing, particularly as Sumo had completed no multiplatform work at this point in its career. "AM2 had concerns that it wouldn't be technically possible to convert the game to either of the PlayStation platforms," admitted Lycett. "They were especially adamant that any PS2 version had to be 60fps to match the Xbox version. So we created a technical demo of the Alpine track from *OutRun 2* running on the PS2. Even at this early stage,

AOXO An early plan for how the menus would work in the new Coast 2 Coast mode.



△××△ If your car isn't sideways pretty much all the time, you should probably learn to play *OutRun 2* better...

we demonstrated we could keep it graphically intact and have a high frame-rate. This addressed AM2's fears and we were green-lit to proceed."

Sumo may have had the go-ahead, but its ambitious plans for the game were going to mean a lot of work.

"SEGA FELT STRONGLY THAT WE NEEDED MORE THAN A STRAIGHT CONVERSION OF THE ARCADE GAME"

OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast, would not only contain the original *OutRun 2*, but also *OutRun 2: SP*. Additionally, Sumo wanted to add more of its own identity to the game, by building on the mini-games that had appeared in the original arcade game. While simply having ports of two stunning arcade games would have been enough for fans, Sumo knew that the casual market would want more

content, so it aimed to create an expanded standalone section entitled 'Coast 2 Coast'.

"As with *OutRun 2*, Sega felt very strongly that we needed more than a straight conversion of the arcade game to warrant the price of a full price console game,"

continues Lycett. "The format of *OutRun 2*'s mission mode had been praised by players, so in typical fashion we opted to go with a bigger and better layout. One element we wanted to add was the idea of branching routes. That way, you always had the choice of a

number of modes to play and hopefully, never got stuck on any given single mission blocking you from unlocking the rest. We also felt there should be a way to play the game as if it was the *OutRun 2 SP* machine in your home, hence the *OutRun 2 SP* mode!"

Coast 2 Coast proved to be an excellent addition to the series, offering a wealth of content that was full of

BLUFFER'S GUIDE

Everything you need to know in five facts



1 *Coast 2 Coast* improves on the original *OutRun* by allowing you to pull off spectacular drifts.



2 Sumo included a huge number of mini-games that will test your driving skills to their limits.



3 *Coast 2 Coast* includes 13 different Ferraris that range from the Testarossa to the F50.



4 Your girlfriend didn't do much in *OutRun*, but she's part of the gameplay in *Coast 2 Coast*.



5 *Coast 2 Coast* improves on the online elements that Sumo first experimented with on the Xbox.



△O×O OutRun 2: SP was heavily inspired by racing through America. Ironically, Yu Suzuki found it too empty when he first went there in the Eighties while researching Out Run.

FURTHER READING



OLDER – TOCA RACE DRIVER 2: THE ULTIMATE RACING SIMULATOR

After Sumo tackled its impressive Xbox port of *OutRun 2*, Codemasters asked the developer to convert *TOCA Race Driver 2* to the PSP. Sumo relished the chance and delivered an amazingly accurate port that was crammed with content. It even catered for 12-player online racing.



NEWER – SONIC & ALL-STARS RACING TRANSFORMED

Sumo's healthy relationship with Sega has seen it trusted with some of Sega's biggest IPs. *All-Stars Racing Transformed* was an excellent sequel that not only boasted some fantastic kart racing, but it also included some of the most stunning fan service to feature in a videogame to date.

STANDOUT MOMENT



TAKING THE TESTAROSSA FOR A TEST DRIVE

A big part of the appeal of the original *Out Run* was the ability to race an open-top Ferrari Testarossa in exotic locations. It was a completely different experience to the other arcade racers of the time and Sumo made this magic live on with the excellent *Coast 2 Coast*. While it takes a while to clock

up the points needed to unlock it (unless you use cheat codes, of course) finally taking to the road in the Testarossa (once you have selected the original 1986 soundtrack) is more than worth the graft. It's proof that sometimes, the new experience can end up being far superior to the original that spawned it.

variety. Events were themed around four characters: Flag Man, Jennifer, Clarissa and Holly. Interestingly, the structure of the missions was specifically designed around these characters, both to give them personality and slowly bolster the game's difficulty level. "Jennifer was very demanding, with skill-based missions to subconsciously tune players to the intricacies of handling and course layout through fun objectives such as hitting cones, passing gates, drifting and so on," reveals Lycett. "Flag Man put those skills to the test with race events. The goal here was to recreate the fun races we were having in multiplayer and Time Attack, but for the single player. Clarissa and Holly were fun-loving girls, so we planned missions to surprise the player with all manner of unexpected events, inspired by the types of games you'd make up on long car trips as a kid, these included counting cars, math puzzles, spelling, guessing sounds, making sandwiches and all that good stuff."

The Coast 2 Coast mode was arguably the highlight of the game, being absolutely packed with content,

with Lycett telling us the final amount of available missions reached nearly a staggering 500. In addition to the modes already mentioned, there were also Boss Battles that saw your girlfriend deserting you if you didn't beat your opponent, and an endless Time Attack mode that offered huge replay value and remains an aspect of the game that Lycett is particularly proud of. Of course, all this extra content meant more work for the development team, who had several technical challenges to face, particularly as the PS2 had only half the RAM of the 64MB Xbox. When you realise that the original arcade game had 128MB to play with, Sumo's conversions of the game become even more impressive.

"We knew it was going to be a challenge," admitted Lycett. "On the memory side, the only way to really fix this was to reduce the art assets. We'd already taken a pass at this on the previous version, but we knew there were more savings to be made. Any texture that was away from the player could either be halved in size, have the colours reduced, or both. Anything



“WE HAD TO OPTIMISE IT AS MUCH AS WE COULD IN THE TIME WE HAD”

the player couldn't see, like the back of buildings, could be removed. Code wise the challenge was to push as much work as we could from the main CPU core onto the VPU's of the Emotion Engine. We were optimising right up to the day we shipped the game to get the frame-rate as high as possible. The lack of memory on PS2 was also a problem for the audio. Each of the cars had engines sounds sampled from real Ferraris at different rev ranges in 500rpm increments. On top of that, there were all the traffic sounds, timer sounds and more. It took a lot of scrunching to get all that into the 1.4MB of the IOP processor!”

Things were even trickier for the PSP port due to its significantly slower CPU and smaller cache. Fortunately, Sony's tech team's decision to upgrade the console's vector processor and expose its GPU command list format made things a lot easier for the team. Many games were also receiving permission at the time to increase the clock speed of the system,

which would have also greatly helped Sumo. “Sadly it didn't happen in time for us,” admits Lycett. “So as with the PS2, we had to optimise it as much as we could in the time we had, again right up to submission.”

In addition to facing the numerous hardware challenges, Sumo also had to work closely with AM2, a developer that was understandably concerned about getting the game as close to the original as possible. “They were extremely hands-on,” comments Lycett when we ask about the studio's involvement. “A dedicated producer worked with us on-site in Sheffield and we frequently sent builds over to AM2 for review. They insisted on setting up the controller ranges and dead zones to ensure the handling model was as precise regardless of the platform, so Time Attack scores could be comparable. They'd review tracks right down to the pixel



THE MISSING LINK

Steve Lycett explains why the ability to connect between PS2 and PSP was so important

Not many people know this, but it's actually possible to connect the PS2 and PSP versions together, which unlocks additional content for both of them, including a car for each system, new music and a night-time version of the Sunny Beach course. It's completely unique to the systems and isn't found on any other versions of the game. You can also transfer your saves between each system, with Sumo effectively beating the now popular Cross-Play to the punch. “This was really designed as a thank you for anyone who bought both versions, though it proved slightly controversial. Players complained they had content they couldn't access that they'd paid for, even though this was effectively bonus content.” Fortunately Sumo had a back-up plan: you can enter cheats to unlock everything.



level, too. They expected the conversions to be as close to the original arcade version as possible, we spent a lot of time ensuring that quality bar was achieved. That said, most of the mission designs we suggested came through without any real changes to the final game, so again it was great to have that trust and respect from both AM2 and Sega.”

That trust and respect from Sega allowed Sumo to have the confidence to create a sequel that greatly expanded upon Sega's original game and helped to give *Coast 2 Coast* its own distinct personality. It's unclear if Sega will ever get around to creating another sequel to the original *Out Run*, but in many ways it doesn't have to – Sumo's excellent offering will continue to keep us busy for many years to come.

Steve Lycett would like to thank Craig Wright, Chris Rea, Pete Ellacott and Travis Ryan for jogging his memory.



INTERVIEW

NEW WORLD ORDER

We speak to Ru Weerasuriya, CEO of Ready At Dawn and creative director on *The Order: 1886*, about making the PS4 exclusive that sets a new benchmark for graphical fidelity

Has the concept of *The Order: 1886* been something that's been developing since you first started the studio?

Yeah, absolutely. Actually, [the time] I first put pen to paper was 2006 I think, on the first story. Then over time, it was just ideas about what things could be, how alternate history could work, what are the rules that we need to apply if we did something like this – those were built over time. We started talking about gameplay mechanics in 2010 – we were ready to do [our own] IP, not necessarily this IP, but we were ready to work on the game that we wanted to make and were discussing mechanics. Then we started talking about action shooters, cover systems, melee and all that stuff and as we were talking more and more about it, this took only a few weeks honestly, talking about gameplay mechanics. As we were talking about it, I just told the guys, 'look, I think I have the perfect IP for this'. We had three or four IPs that internally

we were toying with but this one particularly, I was telling them, 'hey, I think this is going to work'.

The games you've done before have been working on other people's IPs – what's the difference working on your own?

You're extremely protective of everything that

to allow for freedom, so it's really difficult to hold that line while at the same time making sure that everyone can contribute and make their own impact on the game.

The cinematic feel of *The Order* has been a big feature that you have talked about before. Is that something that your studio had in mind from the beginning of its development or was that particular to this project?

No, that's something we had for a long time. I don't think I've ever talked about this actually, but the very first time I'd requested and

I'd told the team that I wanted to do something different on the cinematic side – no cinematics, everything had to be running in-game, no more pre-rendered nothing – was on *God Of War*: On the *God Of War* we made on PSP, I said, 'guys, we should try and do this', but it was so hard to do it on PSP at the time in the right way that it didn't happen. When we tackled *The Order*, from

“NO CINEMATICS, EVERYTHING HAD TO BE RUNNING IN-GAME, NO MORE PRE-RENDERED NOTHING”

you do. The big difference was holding the line all the time. On other IPs, you kind of know there's someone else over there who is going to raise the flag if something goes wrong. Here, you become the cheerleader and the champion of a certain vision. So it becomes this whole thing of, 'no, no, no, I know you want to do this, but this is where it needs to go'. But, at the same time, you have

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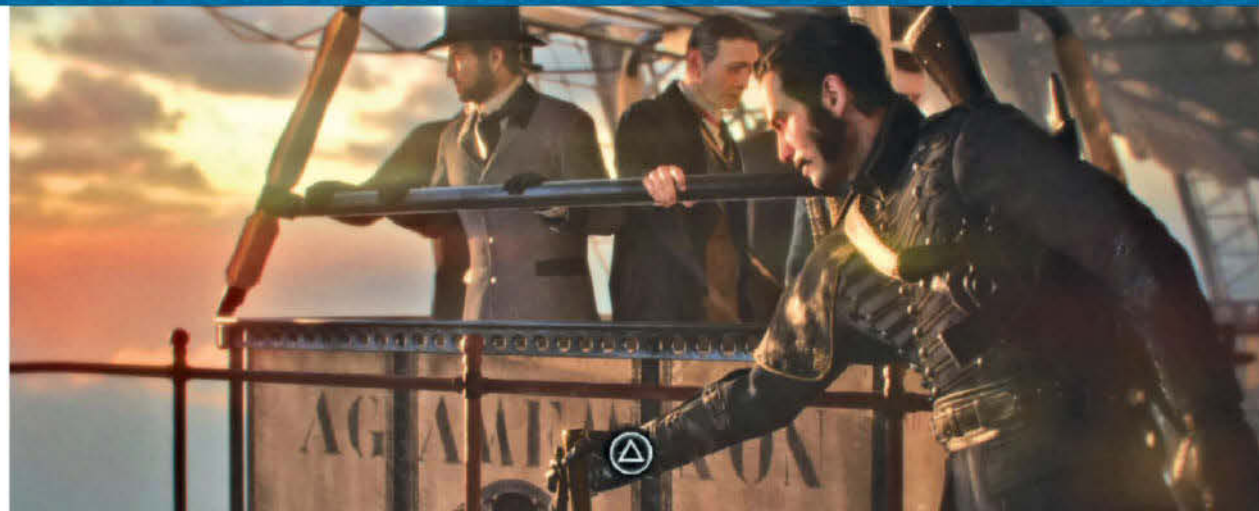
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the very beginning, it was very simple. The rule was, we are not going to have this conversation again – myself, the design director, we were all on the same page, we said this is not up for discussion – this game will not have pre-rendered cinematics. It's going to run in-game – everything has to. It's a good thing and in some ways it was a really, really tough task for a lot of people. We put a lot of burden on a lot of people to make this happen.

So why was it so important for you to have it like that, so there wasn't this transition?

It was for immersion. I don't know if you've ever had that in a game where you really love the game and it breaks, and there's



a pre-rendered cinematic and it doesn't look the same as the guy you just saw [in the gameplay]. There's something really off. If your emotions are like a EKG (heart monitor) that keeps on going, you want this thing to keep on climbing as you're playing, but the problem is that, when you have these things, it just drops. You're never quite where you were and it takes time to get back to that emotional attachment. There are many things that can break that, but one of those things is how that segmentation of cinematic and gameplay happens. How do we break that? If we can get out of that, we have won one of the battles and we can keep the players immersed in what looks like the same thing all the way through.

It's quite interesting to hear you previously talk about the half-breeds becoming outcasts in the game's history. Are the outcasts and the rebels being presented as bad guys, or is there a sense that they are justified in their anger?

Well the thing is, we never wanted to build a black and white world. The reality of every conflict in the world is that there are two sides to it. So I think that there was a lot of that which needed to come into the game and when I was trying to figure out the storyline, and the alliances, and where they stood in the world and society, that definitely came into play. If you look at society as a whole, there is usually a reason behind the things that people do. This game – it's funny, we're are going to get into something more philosophical than games – and the way that it is built and the story and all that is a reflection in a lot of ways of our world, of humanity, of the way it was back in the 1800s. It needed to echo that greyness there. Everybody thought they were doing the right thing for their own reasons. Nobody is truly good or truly bad – it's a big part of how we viewed the IP.

EXTENDED PLAY

CALL OF DUTY

Its compulsive multiplayer is pretty good at keeping players coming back for more, but if you have dropped off, those DLC packs have started to roll out for Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare, meaning it's a great time to return

"ZOMBIES NOW HAVE EXO SUITS. YES, THAT MEANS THAT ZOMBIES CAN NOW BOOST JUMP"

HAVOC DLC

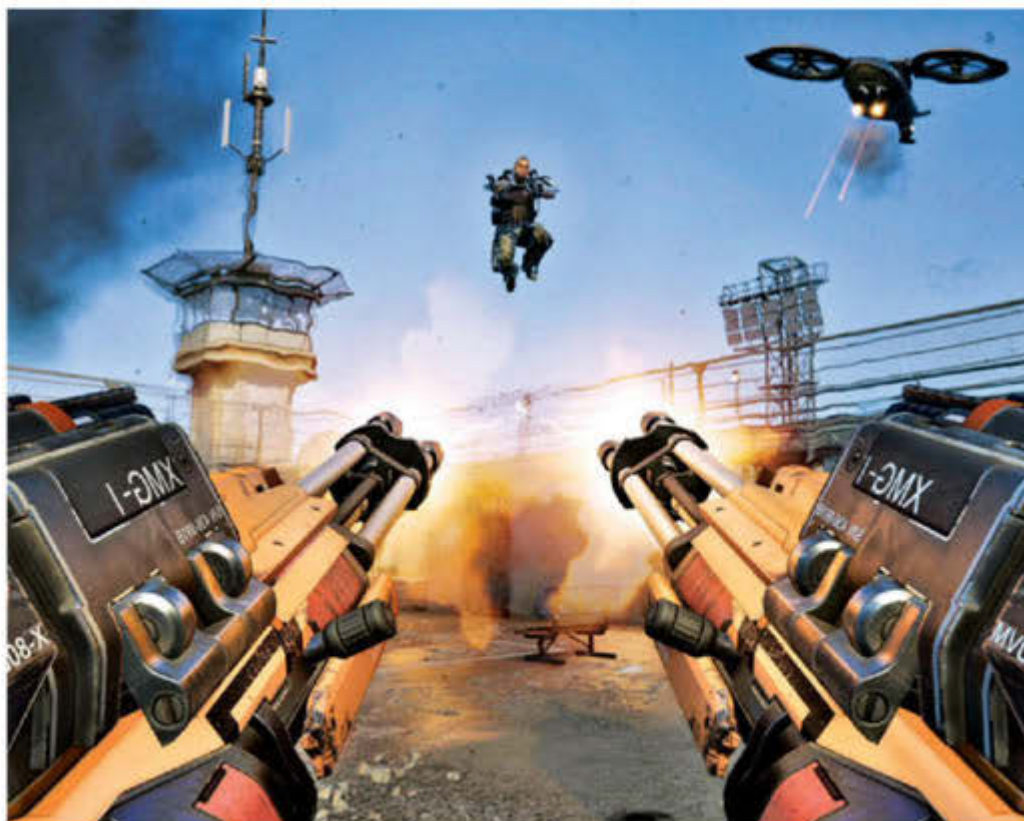
■ **THE FIRST OF** four planned DLC packs for *Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare*, Havoc should inject a bit of variety into the mix for any of you who know every map like the back of your hand. There are four new maps: Sideshow, a great map for snipers; Drift, which revolves around a moving carousel; Core, set in a destroyed nuclear facility; and the fast-paced Urban. Then, of course, there is the addition of the

new Exo Zombies mode. In many ways, it's the same as the four-player zombie modes that have appeared in various *Call Of Duty* games. The difference here is that the zombies have Exo suits. Yes, that means that zombies can now boost jump. Thankfully, you get a few new weapons to deal with them, including one that's been described by developers Sledgehammer as a triple-powered sawn-off energy shotgun. Nice.



EXO SURVIVAL

■ **WE'RE WILLING TO** bet that the vast majority of you have stuck to *Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare's* competitive multiplayer modes. That's perfectly understandable, because it's the best part of the game. Still, it's worth giving cooperative multiplayer mode, Exo Survival, a shot. Exo Survival pits you and up to three other players against waves of enemies in a series of 25 rounds. If you survive until the end, the rounds are reset and the difficulty is increased. As you progress through each round, you earn upgrade points that can be used to get new weapons, attachments, perks and Scorestreaks that will aid you in your fight. Thankfully, you keep all your upgrades through each cycle of the mode's 25 rounds.



GET IN ON ESPORTS

■ **WHILE IT HASN'T** come to the UK yet, Sony has started rolling out the PlayStation Official League, an eSports platform that's available to PS Plus subscribers. The league is being supported by the likes of *Battlefield*, *FIFA* and, of course, *Call Of Duty*. With both individual

and team prizes on offer, you've got a pretty good incentive to brush up on your *Call Of Duty* skills in anticipation of its arrival. Maybe while we're waiting, we'll go and compete in the *Call Of Duty* Championship and win one of those \$1 million prizes. Well, we can dream...



CAMPAIGN

■ **WITH THE UNDERSTANDABLE** focus on *Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare's* multiplayer, the campaign often gets overlooked. You might find it worthwhile to go back and give it a try now that you've had plenty of time to get acquainted with multiplayer, however. Throwing the technology that *Advanced Warfare's* fiction allows for into the equation allowed developer



Sledgehammer to construct some spectacular set pieces. We played the campaign in short bursts in-between playing the multiplayer and found it to be a fun experienced in those bite-sized chunks. If its promise of action movie spectacle isn't quite enough for you, don't forget that *Advanced Warfare's* campaign has also got lots of Kevin Spacey.



CLASSIC CODS

■ **THE FUTURISTIC WARFARE** with which the *Call Of Duty* series has come to be associated means it's easy to forget that it started as a World War II shooter. Those games were pretty good, too. It's worth going back to those early *CODs*, if for no other reason than to see how the building blocks of *COD* fell into place in the early years. If that doesn't float your boat, how about a trip down memory lane to whatever game got you into the series? And yes, believe it or not, you can still find people playing *Modern Warfare* and *Modern Warfare 2* online.

BLUFFER'S GUIDE

DISGAEA

WHAT IS IT?

■ **IF YOU ARE** in any way fond of large numbers, you won't find a more reliable source than Nippon Ichi's *Disgaea* franchise. It's a turn-based strategy RPG where you shove your underlings around a grid looking to smack any opposition into submission, but its stats put all of its rivals to shame – the maximum character level is a whopping 9,999, stats easily grow into the millions, and damage values grow so large that numbers have to be abbreviated.

As impressive as this is, though, it's the creativity of the team that makes the games shine. Each new entry layers on all kinds of crazy new mechanics. Reincarnation to improve stats; tile puzzles that can modify battles with various buffs and debuffs; dungeons within items, where you can kidnap stat boosts for use elsewhere; and a full court system, where you can lobby to change the game's rules before a council of demons are just the start. It's as daft as it seems, and the writing reflects this, too – Nippon Ichi's localisation team is one of the best, ensuring that the *Disgaea* games are always entertaining and frequently laugh-out-loud funny.



THE STORY SO FAR

■ **THERE'S NOT REALLY** an overarching story to the *Disgaea* series. It's more that each game follows similar themes with a new set of characters, kind of like how Square handled *Final Fantasy* back before Lightning was in *everything*. The usual setup, then, is that you take on the role of an Overlord, a ruling demon in the Netherworld. Threats change from game to game, but it's usually another, more powerful Overlord with their burning eyes on a coup or an assassination in order to nick your stuff – it's quite literally a cut-throat heierarchy down there and there's always a more powerful demon out there to try and overthrow you.

In many ways, the story doesn't even matter – it's an amusing way to learn the ropes and have a load of nonsense shouted at you while you laugh along, but the real game doesn't begin until the post-game. Completing the entire story without mucking around with modifiers or power-leveiling will typically only get you to around level 100, meaning that you're going to want to pick up those other 9,899 levels in the extras, which are plentiful and great. You can probably power through the storyline in a few evenings or even a weekend, but you'll be rocking challenge maps, side quests and bonus dungeons for many months after.

WHERE TO START

■ **THE FIRST GAME** is by far the simplest in terms of mechanics, meaning it's actually quite hard to go back to after playing more recent versions – if you plan on playing more than one of them, *Hour Of Darkness* (or *Afternoon Of Darkness*, should you plump for the great PSP port) is where to go. If you're somewhat familiar with the series, *Disgaea 4* is so loaded with content that you probably won't have time to play any other game ever again.



ANYTHING BESIDES GAMES?

■ **SURE. A MIDDLING** animated series ran for just 12 episodes but managed to recap (well, sort of) the events of the first game in that time while adding a bunch of new stuff and fiddling with the timeline a little. There have also been a selection of light novels and manga adaptations that did much the same, the latter also toying with the visual style to present familiar characters in a new light. It's all about the merch here, though – Nippon Ichi's online store offers amazing special edition goodies and all manner of branded wonders. In fact, there may or may not be several Prinny plushies in view as we write this (full disclosure: there absolutely are, and they're awesome).



ANY SPIN-OFFS?

■ **A FAIR FEW**, actually. *Disgaea Infinite* is a PSP visual novel where you play as a Prinny trying to solve Laharl's murder by possessing other demons; *Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?* is a hardcore platformer with a limited amount of lives (well, Prinnies) with which to clear the whole thing; its sequel, *Dawn Of Operation Panties*, *Dood!* is basically the same thing but harder still;

Makai Kingdom for PS2 brought together *Disgaea* and *Phantom Brave* characters under the rule of a demon who had turned himself into a book; *Disgaea: Netherworld Unbound* was a free Android game in the spirit of the core series but with perhaps one or two in-app purchase options too many (read: more than zero). Prinny lovers need never go wanting, basically.

WHO ARE THESE GUYS?



LAHARL

The hero of the original *Disgaea* may not know how to wear shirts, but that hasn't stopped him from becoming a fan favourite. He's arrogant, but he gets away with it on account of being the son of the Netherworld's former king. He's appeared in every main series game and not always as you see him here – he's been spotted in Prinny form in other games, while he gets turned female in *Disgaea D2*.



ETNA

Another demon with a questionable wardrobe, Etna is, again, from the first game, where she was one of Laharl's few vassals when he woke from his elongated slumber. She leads the Prinny Squad and does so ruthlessly, but that mean streak isn't limited to the little guys – she's not what you call trustworthy, at least not to begin with. Like Laharl, she's appeared in all the main games to date.



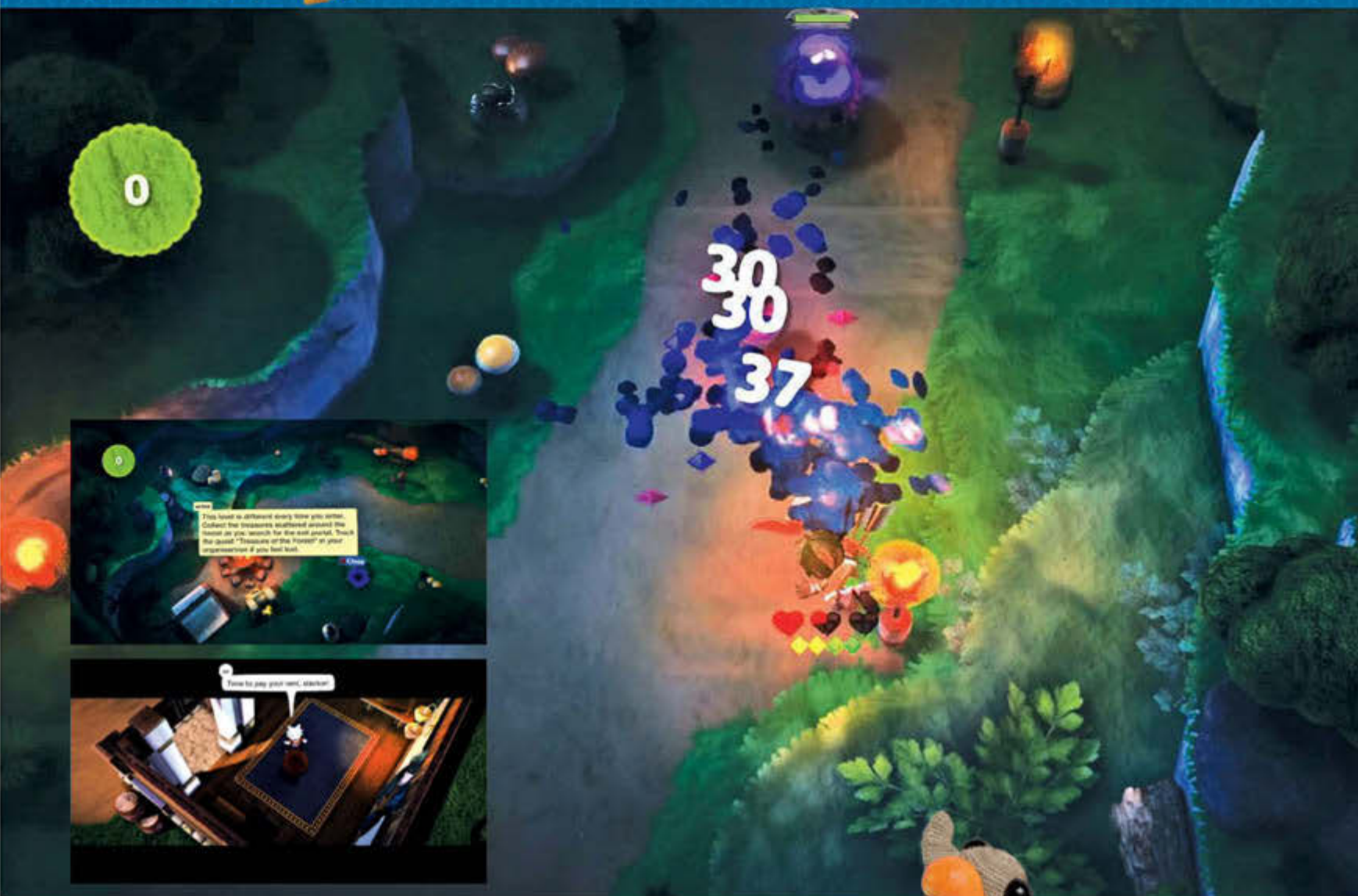
AXEL

The Dark Hero himself first appeared in *Disgaea 2*, a former superstar whose popularity seemed to be on the decline, things only got worse from there on for Axel. In *Disgaea 3*, he is still seen to be hopelessly clinging to his showbiz past, while in *Disgaea 4* he just comes across as downright deluded, as nobody in the Netherworld even seems to know who he is.



PRINNIES

The unofficial mascots of the franchise, and pretty much the best things ever. Those who die having led worthless lives or with mortal sin come back in the Netherworld as Prinnies, where they must serve for aeons to earn enough money to be resurrected. They say 'dood' a lot and explode when thrown. Subservient and loyal to the bitter, explosive end, you can always count on a Prinny.



MASTERCLASS

LITTLEBIGPLANET 3

We see a lot of creators take inspiration from games they love. This time round, we have a *Diablo III*-inspired adventure

TIME TAKEN TO MAKE: Two weeks **NUMBER OF PLAYS:** 24,146 **TIMES HEARTED:** 2,522

■ **AMONG THE NUMEROUS** improvements and additions in *LittleBigPlanet 3*, the inclusion of the Adventure Map, the quest tracker and the ability to save a player's progress was always going to lead to lengthy, complete-games-in-their-own-right sort of creations. That's where Felkroth's adventure, *Treasure Hunter*, comes in, combining a ton of fancy new *LBP3* features to make a top-down, *Diablo III*-style RPG. In truth, he's had a bit of practice with this sort of level, previously having made levels in *LBP2* with a similar overhead

viewpoint. Now with the added ability of tracking quests, however, this concept is all the more fleshed out. It also handily helps to save your progress, so you can quit, return and finish off the level – or even grind a little bit more, like in all good RPGs – whenever you want.

Best of all is how there are four different classes to play: the archer, the mage, the warrior and the monk. You can probably guess what the differences between each of these classes are but all the same, they each have their own set of abilities, outfits

and even animations. That's all thanks to the *Character Animation Tweaker*, by the way, one of the new tools in *LBP3* that lets you hand-craft your own bespoke animations, rather than tediously recording each one with a Sackbot. The level is playable with up to four players, too, so like any good hack-and-slash RPG, you can jump in with your friends, argue over who plays what class and take on masses of enemies together.

That *Diablo III* comparison isn't actually all that far off, either. While there is a town to explore and



CREATOR
CURATOR

We have a chat with the level's creator, Felkroth, about his impressive hack-and-slash RPG

How did your work on your earlier levels help you in creating *Treasure Hunter*?

My first 'real' level in *LBP* was the first Frozen Flame level. Back then I was just learning the tools myself and barely knew my way around the logic. After a while, I was ready to try something bigger, and so I created the Sealed Fate levels. Making Sealed Fate taught me a lot on how to work with the numbers and math logic in *LBP*, how to work around the limitations of the Thermometer and generally to be very effective with the use of different materials and decorations.

What do you use to make this view work so well?

LBP 3 provides two absolutely amazing new tools that take top-down levels to entirely new levels. Character Rotation Tweaker and Character Animation Tweaker allow me to both rotate the character to any angle as well as easily play any animation on demand. The Animation Tweaker even allows me to blend between two or more animations to make entirely new animations. In addition to this, now that we have an easy access to 16 layers, it's much easier to put in so much more depth in top-down areas. Sure, it was possible to use 32+ layers in *LBP2* as well, but that required use of glitches and your gameplay was still restricted mostly to the three main layers.

The levels you have created are always something different rather than just platformers. Why is that?

Generally, as a creator and indie game developer, I just hate the idea of making something that has already been made by someone else. If someone else had already published a top-down RPG using the new tools I mentioned earlier, I would have probably gone in an entirely different direction! On top of that, it's always fun to try and find new ways to push the limits of *LBP* to see what it's capable of!

Where there any games that inspired your level?

Initially, the project was even more ambitious than it ended up being. At first I wanted to make it something like *Diablo III* or even a miniature MMO. The tech in *LBP* sadly doesn't allow that quite yet... I could only save data on whoever is hosting the game. Now the host determines what the character levels are and how far in the quest you are, but initially I wanted everyone have their personal character that they could improve and bring to other people's games. Maybe that will be possible at some point later – who knows!

Do you have any picks from other creators?

I don't play *LBP* much. It's mostly just Create mode for me. However, there have been a few very artistic levels that have wowed me and a couple of levels that pushed the limits of *LBP* so far that even my jaw would drop! If I had to name a level from recent memory, I'd say Cubots March! by Enigma_0123 is my favourite level so far. It honestly felt like a full indie game and I spent dozens of hours on solving all of the hardest puzzles it offered. Also, while it's not finished and published yet, I'd say acdramon's Project HILL is shaping up to be one of the most detailed levels to date. The community is in for another treat when he finally does finish it!



AOX The ability to track quests is important for any RPG – it's almost like that's exactly what Sumo Digital wanted to be created when they added this feature in.



AOX The variety in the enemies is really quite impressive. They don't just look different, either, they all move or attack in different ways too.

NPCs to meet, this adventure also has a randomly generated map to play in. When you head off to the combat areas to complete whichever quests you've been given, you're actually being placed inside a randomly created zone, one that pieces different tile sets together – just like *Diablo III*. You can use the quest tracker to find the objective easily enough but the fact that you can return a second time to find the routes have changed and even the monsters you fight are different is great. Paths connect, side-routes appear for extra rewards but there's always an end and plenty of varying creatures for you to slay.

It's important that you do slay them, too, because like every good RPG, you do start fairly weak and even some of the early enemies you

encounter might prove a challenge. As you kill, however, you earn cash – or Collectabells, in this case – which can be spent on upgrades to your class and even special items to help you on your adventure. You can decide whether to spend all your points on extra health or attack damage, or save up and buy that new interesting looking item; we're not kidding when we say this is basically a fully-fledged RPG. And best of all, since it's all part of an adventure map, more and more can be added to the level – like DLC, but for free and inside *LittleBigPlanet 3* itself. You should definitely check this level out and, if you do enjoy it, you will certainly want to Heart it and return again and again since there may be new areas to visit or new beasts to batter each time you do.

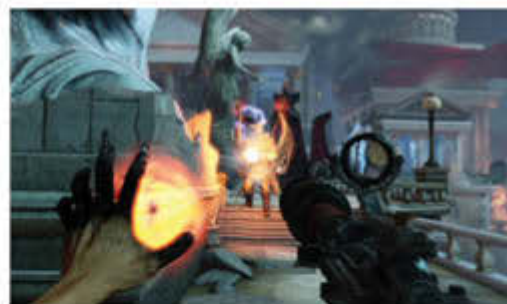
HOW TO...

TELL A STORY

We've come a long way in videogame storytelling and these are just some of the ways to tell a great story...

■ **BACK IN THE** day, videogames hardly bothered with a story at all. Over the years, the quality of storytelling has increased exponentially, with some games taking their cues from cinema and other

mediums to try and enhance the things that can only be done in videogames. Don't get us wrong, there are still plenty of games with terrible stories, but there are some good examples to follow, too...



USE THE ENVIRONMENT

■ **THE MAIN THING** that marks out videogames from other methods of storytelling is interactivity – the fact that a player can explore a world in a way they can't in other mediums. Videogames can leverage that fact, leaving things for players to find as they move around. Take *BioShock* as an example – the game's environment tells a story in and of itself. The lesson is that you don't always have to tell – sometimes, you can just show.



MAKE IT RELATABLE

■ **IT'S PERFECTLY POSSIBLE** to have a game set in extraordinary circumstances and still have its characters feel human and relatable, and *The Last Of Us* is a perfect example of that. Including flourishes that let us see the vulnerability or foibles of our protagonists helps us to relate to the situations they find themselves in and that helps us to engage with the story. Fortunately, there's been a tendency to try and present more rounded and relatable characters in recent years. Long may that continue.

LET PLAYERS DISCOVER

■ **WHILE IT'S NOT** always the case, trying to deliver story information to the player directly can be a folly. Sometimes it's better to let them discover things for themselves. Whether it's through audio logs (*BioShock Infinite*), documents (*Dishonored*), or dialogue (*Mass Effect*), there are multiple places where you can hide details for players to find themselves. Doing so can aid investment to the story by virtue of the fact that you feel like you discovered something for yourself.



LET US CHOOSE

■ **AS THE LIKES** of *The Walking Dead* have proven, one great way of getting us invested in a story is by letting us have some ownership over it, letting us decide how it progresses. Having a story that adapts to your actions in one way or another makes it feel more like it's 'yours' and that can be incredibly powerful. Of course, game stories can only be so flexible, so developers also have to be skilled at hiding the string-pulling that's going on behind the scenes.



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TROPHY GUIDE

PS PLUS TROPHY GUIDE

ODDWORLD: NEW 'N' TASTY

PLATFORM: PS4 DIFFICULTY: 2/5

TROPHIES: 37 1 5 9 22

■ **THERE ARE A** lot of Trophies to look out for with *Oddworld: New 'N' Tasty*, but you'll also want to be smart about how you play it if you want to do it in the fewest playthroughs. Starting on Hard is fine since you'll need to for 'Odd Messiah', but make sure you save every Mudokon, otherwise you'll have to replay the game all over again. After that, you should play through again on Easy, this time killing as many Mudokons as you can for the bad ending. Lastly, you'll want to aim for 'New 'N' Hasty', and again playing on Easy is fine here. This Trophy requires a speedrun in under three hours but it is cumulative. This way, you can select different chapters from the chapter select screen, replaying levels that you feel you took too long on. This is handy since you don't actually have to complete the whole game in one run, and instead focus on sections you had difficulty with.

OLLIOLLI 2:
WELCOME TO OLLIWOOD

PLATFORM: PS4/VITA DIFFICULTY: 4/5

TROPHIES: 24 1 6 5 12

■ **THE TROPHIES THEMSELVES** in *OlliOlli 2* aren't too difficult, but it requires practice if you want to get that Platinum. You should focus on completing every stage, ticking off various tricks and building the necessary skills to complete the harder tasks. After that, complete each of the Rad versions of their levels, as well as competing in seven different Daily Grinds. With the 50 Spots you need to complete, you don't actually have to try too hard – landing a flip trick right at the start will be enough to set a score and count towards 'Spotless' and 'Every Trick In The Book' should come naturally as you play. Then there's 'The First One Is The Hardest', which requires landing a combo of over a million points; in truth, you should have no problem completing this on later stages.

VALIANT HEARTS: THE GREAT WAR

PLATFORM: PS4 DIFFICULTY: 1/5

TROPHIES: 20 0 0 1 19

■ **THERE'S NO PLATINUM** on this one, with nine of the 20 trophies all unlocked just by completing the game. There are some collectable and section-specific Trophies, though, so you'll want to read through the list first if you want to aim for 100% – most are fairly self-explanatory, and usually give you a clue for when they might appear. 'Brothers' Keeper' requires ensuring your platoon survives the battle of the Somme, so as you're riding the tank, focus your attacks on the planes – and make sure you put out the fuse when inside the cave. 'Healing Hero' occurs on Chapter 4 and requires saving Karl three times without a single mistake; this is a QTE section with three increasingly difficult tests, but if you make a mistake on *any* of them then you'll need to restart the chapter to earn the Trophy. The same goes for the 'Taxi Racer' Trophy, where you can't take any damage in a taxi mission. There are three possible attempts at this Trophy, starting at Chapter 1.





SHERLOCK HOLMES: CRIMES AND PUNISHMENTS

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 2/5
TROPHIES: 25 🏆 1 🏆 6 🏆 12 🏆 6

■ **YOU CAN GO** about this in two ways: enjoy the puzzles and the decisions you make, then use chapter select to mop up any you might have missed; or you can read through the Trophy descriptions for each chapter to see what you need to look out for so you don't miss anything. Explore everywhere and search for every clue and you

“YOU’LL ESPECIALLY NEED TO FIND ALL THE EVIDENCE”

should have no problem piecing bits together. You’ll especially need to find all the evidence if you want the ‘A Complex Mind’ Trophy. Also, when it comes to making a decision at the end, always make sure you go for the same option for all six cases: either Absolve or Condemn. If you don’t, you’ll miss out on ‘A Man Of Character’. You should remember to interact with Holmes’ dog Toby as soon as you possibly can on each case, too, for ‘Dog-Fancier’.

PAPO & YO

PLATFORM: VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 1/5
TROPHIES: 10 🏆 0 🏆 2 🏆 1 🏆 7

■ **THIS GAME IS** a little short on Trophies. All the same, the few you do get will take some work. You’ll need to play through the game at least once to unlock the ability to collect hats, and while you do, you should avoid using the hints system for the ‘Don’t Need No Hints’ Trophy. Collectable hats will appear after finishing the game, so you’ll need to play through at least a little bit more to collect 25 of these if you want 100%. There’s also a Trophy hidden on the main menu screen: ‘White Frog Massacre’ is unlocked by pressing up or down on the D-Pad or the two analogue sticks to repeatedly to spawn chalk frogs, try to get as many on-screen as you can before they stop spawning or the first frog is about to jump off the screen. At this point, press X to squish them.



COUNTERSPY

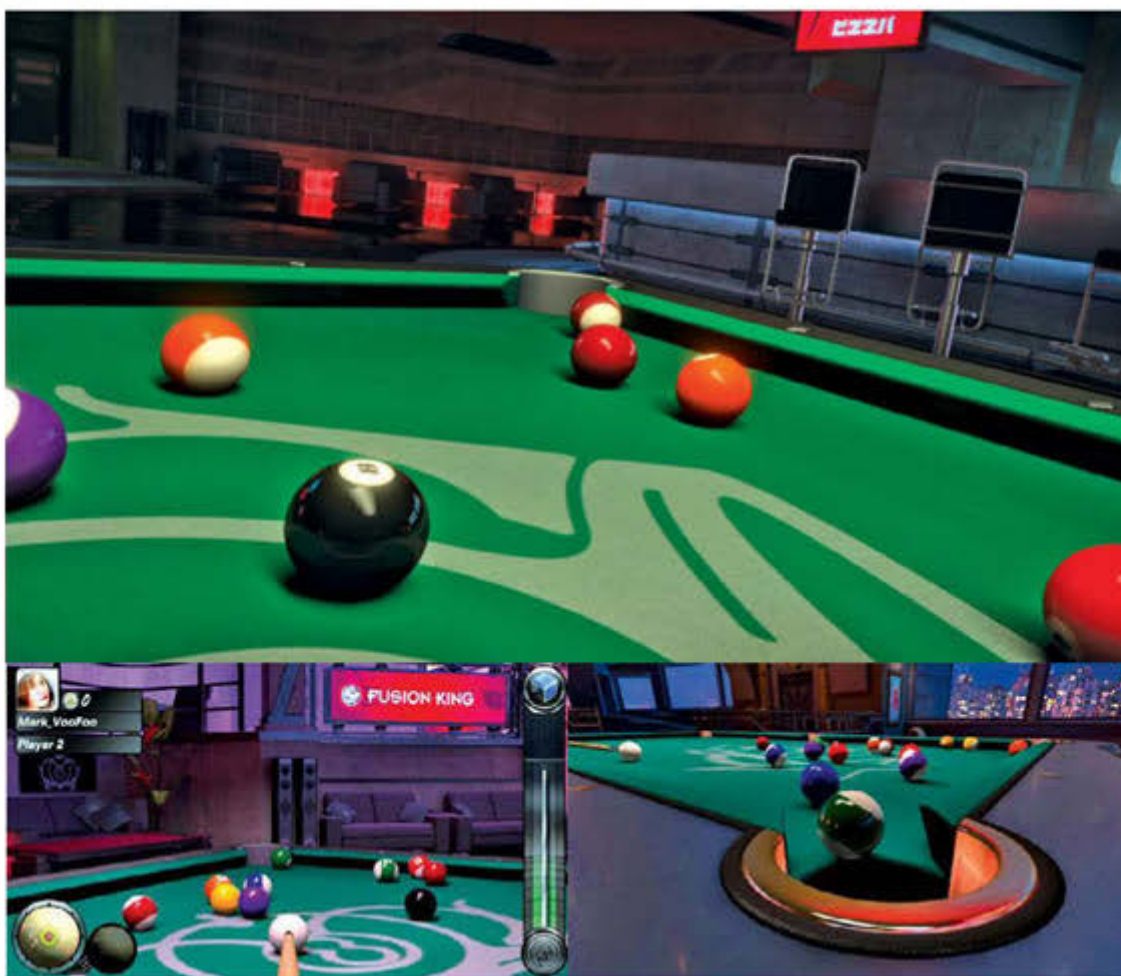
PLATFORM: PS4/ PS3/VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 1/5
TROPHIES: 13 🏆 0 🏆 1 🏆 2 🏆 10

■ **THE MAJORITY OF** the Trophies in *CounterSpy* will be unlocked as you play. You will need to play through three times for 100%, however, since you unlock two extra difficulties that need to be completed. On the harder difficulties, consider purchasing the Hushmaker Rifle and the Perforator Rifle as soon as you can. ‘Super Spy’ is the obligatory ‘complete a level without being seen’ Trophy, and though its completion is mostly obvious, you should aim to get this as soon as possible since the levels are increasingly difficult. ‘On Target’ is the one to watch, though; at no point should you use a ‘Continue’ during any of your three playthroughs, otherwise this Trophy will be voided. If you reach DEFCON 1 and the countdown kicks in, consider quitting the mission – if you fail then you’ll either have to use Continue, or restart the entire campaign from the beginning.

INSTANT GAME
COLLECTION

HUSTLE KINGS

What a world we live in. You don't have to go down to the pool hall to do your hustlin' any more – you can pretty much do it from the comfort of your front room on PS4 for free!



■ **IF YOU DON'T** fancy going the pub and forking out the change for a real game of pool, or if you can't bring yourself to open your wallet for *Pure Pool*, for whatever reason, there is a free-to-play alternative on PS4.

Bizarrely, *Hustle Kings* is made by the same studio that created *Pure Pool*. While it has nowhere near the visual fidelity of that game, *Hustle Kings* still looks pretty decent. The big difference between these two pool games is that you need to earn in-game currency in *Hustle Kings*.

There is a single-player mode to get you started with the game and earn you some of that in-game cash, but online competition is where the focus seems to be and it's here you'll earn the most Hustle King Credits (HKC).

Your other option for earning HKC is through the game's daily challenges. Each day, you get a limited number of attempts to try and complete a trick shot, timed challenge, limited shot clear-up and so on, in order to win more currency in order to compete online. From there, you can take to the online lobbies and put your virtual cash on the line in order to gain a chance at boosting your HKC, and your online standing.

If you ask us, the reliance on earning HKC to keep playing online is likely to get a bit annoying, but given that *Hustle Kings* is a free-to-play game, we can't complain too much. In any case, if you're really good, perhaps that will never become an issue.

BECOMING A KING

There are a variety of different modes in *Hustle Kings*, depending on whether you want to compete for cash or for the glory



HUSTLE ROOM

You can bet HKC against other players, looking at their record and cash reserves to help you decide how much to wager.



RANKED ROOM

Rather than money being at stake here, it's rankings and leaderboard places that are on the line if you head into the Ranked Room.



LOCAL MULTIPLAYER

It's great to see that *Hustle Kings* has got a local multiplayer that gives you access to all game modes if you fancy playing with friends.

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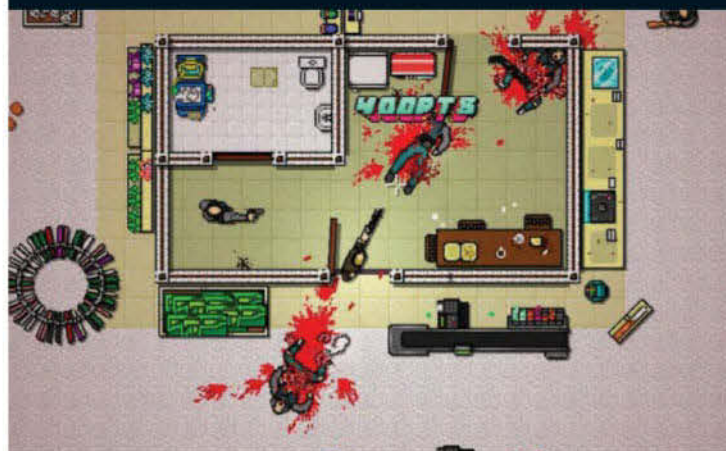
HANDS-ON WITH THE psychological thriller



HUNGER

DELVING INTO TARSIER'S PS4 exclusive

HOTLINE MIAMI 2: WRONG NUMBER



HITTING THOSE WONDERFUL S rankings



LIVE GAMEPLAY STREAMING

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TOURNAMENTS!

Keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter channels for information on our Twitch tournaments, where you can play videogames with us for the world to watch!

The game changes each time, and the best players will win prizes – free games, or just some of the other tat that we found around our office. Come and join in the fun next time and maybe you could win something neat.



MORTAL KOMBAT X

Watch us school some fools in the ridiculously violent *Mortal Kombat X*. It's worth it for the spectacle of seeing broken bones and body parts fly all over the place, if for nothing else. Also, maybe you will even learn a thing or two. We're not bad.

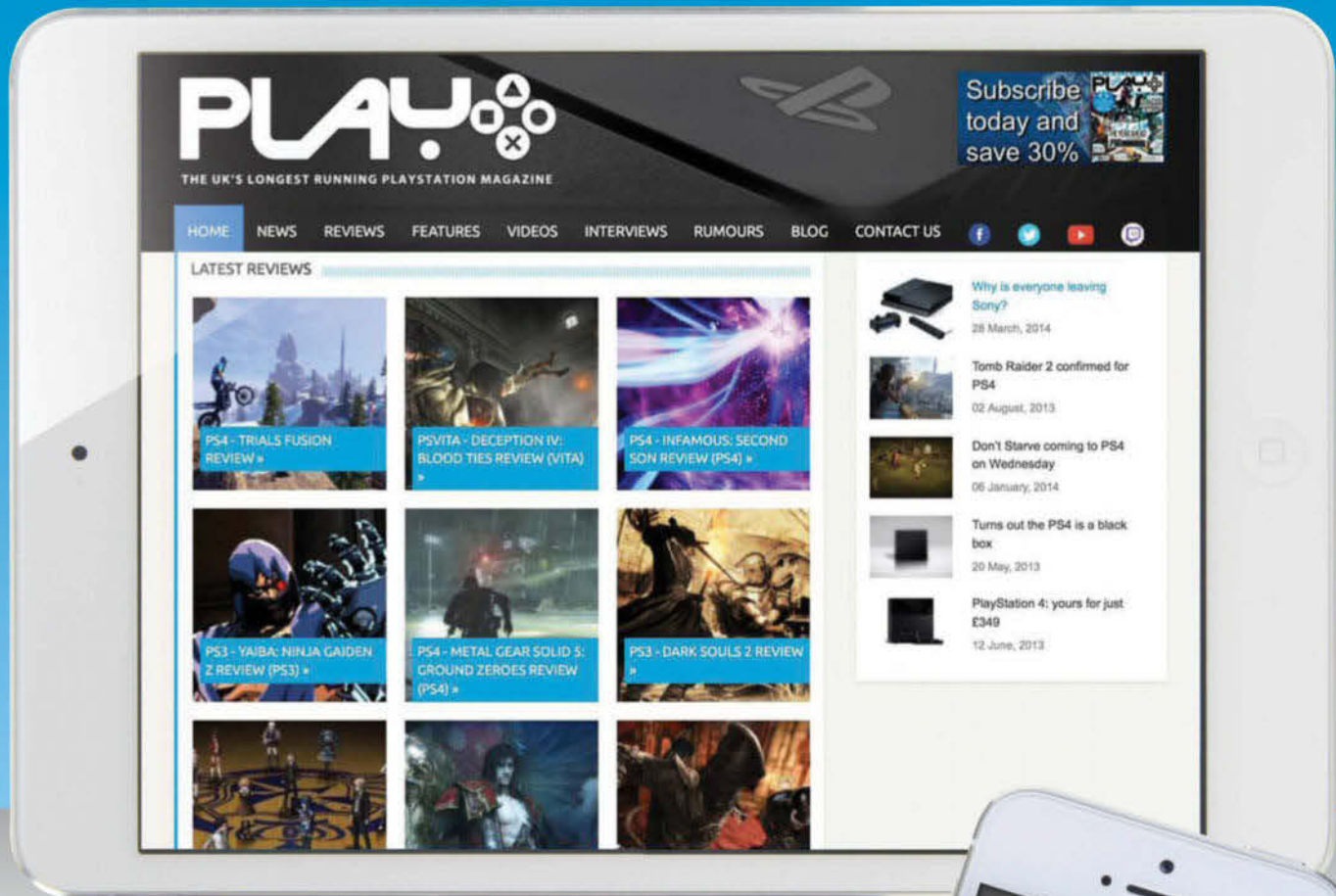


DARK SOULS II: SCHOLAR OF THE FIRST SIN

We've smashed the first *Dark Souls* countless times and proven our skills in the sequel when it came to PS3. Perhaps we'll give the latter one more run in the updated PS4 version...

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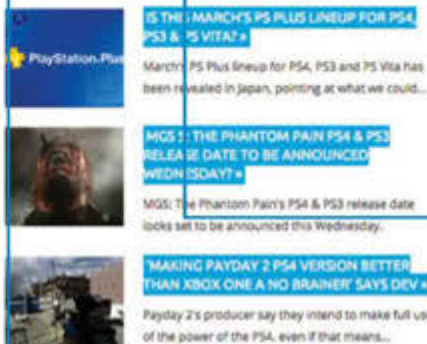
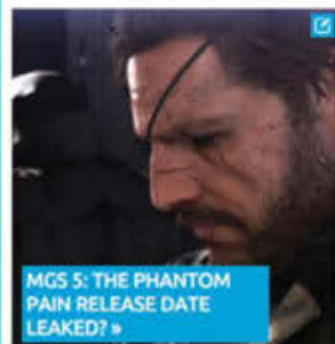
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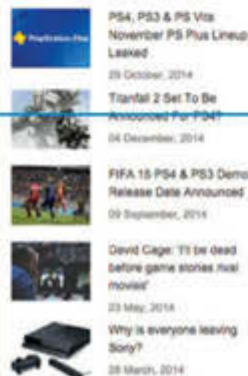




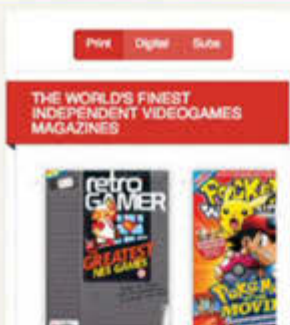
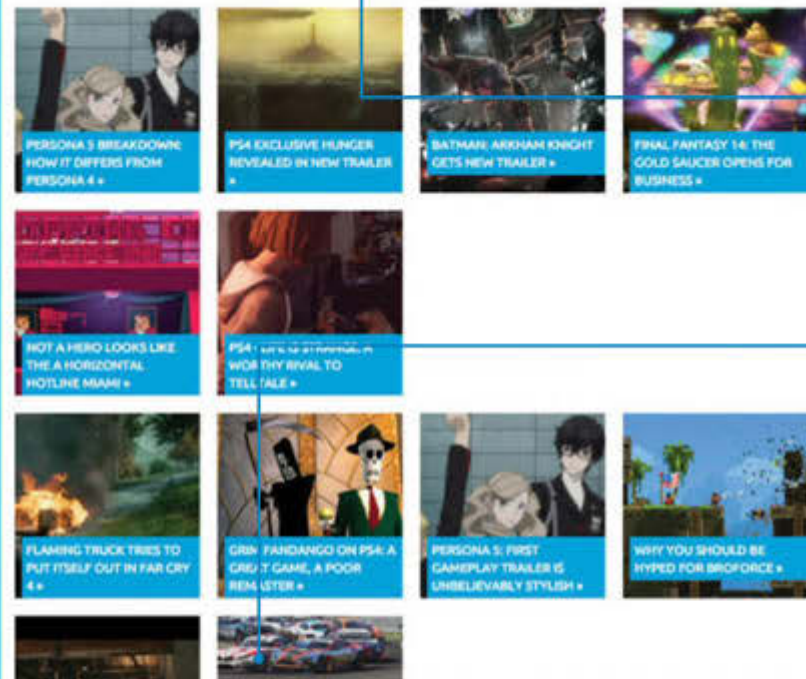
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The slider shows off the most important stories on the site, complete with big pictures and text. Expect to see breaking news, opinion pieces and new trailers in particular.

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Scrolling down will give you a look at the top stories in each section; a brief overview of everything that is going on in the world of PlayStation. We update this every day.

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PLAY+ PLUS PlayList

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT A GAME SCORED THEN THESE PAGES ARE FOR YOU

TEAM PICKS FIGHTING GAME CHARACTERS



top five LUKE ALBIGÉS

- 1 Q (Street Fighter III: Third Strike)
- 2 Astaroth (SoulCalibur)
- 3 Faust (Guilty Gear)
- 4 Jeffry McWild (Virtua Fighter 5)
- 5 Watson (Battle Fantasia)



top five LIAM WARR

- 1 Fred Durst (WWF Smackdown 3)
- 2 Bedman (Guilty Gear Xrd -SIGN-)
- 3 Akuma (Street Fighter III)
- 4 Busta Rhymes (Def Jam: F.F.N.Y.)
- 5 Tina (Dead Or Alive 2)



top five DREW SLEEP

- 1 Brad Wong (Dead Or Alive 5)
- 2 Raphael (SoulCalibur II)
- 3 Lee (Tekken 5)
- 4 Cammy (Street Fighter IV)
- 5 Xianghua (SoulCalibur II)



top five PAUL WALKER-EMIG

- 1 Blanka (Street Fighter II)
- 2 Hwoarang (Tekken 3)
- 3 Ken (Street Fighter Alpha 3)
- 4 Cervantes (SoulCalibur)
- 5 GZA (Wu-Tang: Taste The Pain)

PS4 LISTING



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag	237	83%
Assassin's Creed: Unity	251	65%
Alien: Isolation	249	90%
Battlefield 4	238	80%
Bound By Flame	245	62%
Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare	251	87%
Call Of Duty: Ghosts	238	75%
Child Of Light	244	79%
CounterSpy	248	50%
Daylight	245	20%
Dead Nation: Apocalypse Edition	242	74%
Dead Or Alive 5: Last Round	254	71%
Destiny	249	85%
Destiny: The Dark Below	252	72%
Diablo III: Reaper Of Souls	248	92%
Disney Infinity 2.0	249	80%
Don't Starve	240	81%
Dragon Age: Inquisition	251	84%
Driveclub	250	77%
Dying Light	254	85%
Dynasty Warriors 8 XLCE	243	80%
EA Sports UFC	246	75%
Evolve	254	66%
Far Cry 4	251	80%
Fez	243	95%
FIFA 15	249	85%
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	243	85%
Game Of Thrones: Iron From Ice	253	80%
Geometry Wars 3: Dimensions	252	92%
Grand Theft Auto V	251	97%
Grim Fandango Remastered	254	83%
Guilty Gear Xrd -SIGN-*	253	93%
Hohokum	248	80%
inFamous: First Light	249	55%
inFamous: Second Son	242	86%
Killzone Shadow Fall	238	80%
Killzone Shadow Fall: Intercept	246	84%
Knack	238	55%
Lara Croft And The Temple Of Osiris	252	56%
Lego Batman 3: Beyond Gotham	252	68%
Lego Marvel Super Heroes	238	85%
Lego The Hobbit	244	65%
LittleBigPlanet 3	251	92%
Lords Of The Fallen	251	75%
Mercenary Kings	244	85%
Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes	242	85%
Middle-earth: Shadow Of Mordor	250	80%
Murdered: Soul Suspect	246	48%
NBA 2K15	250	84%
Need For Speed Rivals	238	83%
NHL 15	249	63%
Octodad: Dadliest Catch	244	60%
Outlast	241	73%
PES 2015	250	88%
Plants Vs Zombies: Garden Warfare	248	71%
Resident Evil	253	77%
Resogun	238	91%
Resogun Heroes	247	93%
Rogue Legacy	248	91%
Skylanders Swap Force	238	77%
Skylanders Trap Team	250	79%
Sniper Elite III	246	72%
Switch Galaxy Ultra	253	81%
Tales From The Borderlands: Zer0 Sum	252	70%
Teslagrad	253	75%
The Amazing Spider-Man 2	245	25%
The Binding Of Isaac: Rebirth	251	90%
The Crew	252	52%



An addictive and accomplished shoot-'em-up, *Resogun* is an indie delight and a surprise PS4 launch highlight. Awesome stuff.

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
The Evil Within	250	84%
The Last Of Us Remastered	247	94%
The Order: 1886	254	81%
Thief	241	70%
Tiny Brains	240	68%
Transistor	245	87%
Transformers: Rise Of The Dark Spark	247	30%
Trials Fusion	244	80%
Valiant Hearts	247	64%
War Thunder	239	80%
Watch Dogs	245	80%
Warriors Orochi 3 Ultimate	249	62%
Wolfenstein: The New Order	245	78%
WWE 2K15	252	48%

PS3 LISTING



007 Legends	225	44%
2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil	244	69%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	78%
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
After Burner Climax	193	91%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	223	43%
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Age Of Booty	172	81%
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	207	57%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	82%
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
Aliens: Colonial Marines	230	45%
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
All Zombies Must Die!	214	64%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Amy	215	19%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Ape Escape	208	55%
Aquapazza: Aquaplus Dream Match	239	70%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Arcana Heart 3	207	79%
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Armored Core: For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Armored Core V	217	60%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel	231	44%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed III	225	78%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%
Assassin's Creed: Revelations	212	75%
Assassin's Creed: Rogue	251	74%
Asura's Wrath	216	67%
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist Of Dust	230	60%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	71%
The Baoning	210	72%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	211	94%
Batman: Arkham Origins	237	85%
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Battlefield 3	212	88%
Battleship	219	44%
Bayonetta*	187	93%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	79%
Beat Sketcher	201	85%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	86%
Beyond: Two Souls	236	70%
Binary Domain	216	70%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
BioShock	172	93%
BioShock 2	189	88%
BioShock Infinite	230	97%
Birds Of Steel	217	55%
BlackSite	163	43%
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
Blast Factor	152	72%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	63%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blokus	202	54%
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blur	193	86%
Bodycount	210	54%
Bombberman Ultra	185	82%
Borderlands	185	80%
Borderlands 2	223	90%
Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel	250	69%
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
Braid	188	93%
Brink	206	67%
Brothers: A Tale Of Two Sons	233	83%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Bulletstorm	203	86%
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	235	57%
Burnout Crash	211	79%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Buzz! Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	80%
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger	232	80%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	30%
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castle Crashers	200	88%
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2	241	81%
Carnival Island	213	53%
Catan	195	85%
Cars 2	208	68%
The Cave	230	77%
Catherine	215	61%
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Child Of Eden	211	80%
Chime Super Deluxe	203	80%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
The Club	163	80%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Comet Crash	186	84%

THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

The Order: 1886	81%
Dying Light	85%
Evolve	66%
Dead Or Alive 5: Last Round	71%
Grim Fandango Remastered	83%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Comix Zone	210	62%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Counter Strike: Global Offensive	223	89%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	218	37%
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%
Create	199	71%
Critter Crunch	188	91%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Crysis 2	204	72%
Crysis 3	230	61%
Cubixx HD	207	76%
The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
Damnation	181	38%
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	37%
Dance Dance Revolution	201	52%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Mist	164	53%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Darkness II	215	76%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	211	90%
Dark Souls II	242	90%
Darkstalkers Resurrection	230	82%
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
Darksiders II	221	86%
DC Universe Online	202	80%
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Or Alive 5	223	78%
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Island: Riptide	231	65%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	61%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	201	92%
Dead Space 3	228	70%
Dead Space: Extraction	203	88%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut	231	82%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Deadpool	233	60%
DeathSpank	195	83%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Defiance	231	50%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
Destroy All Humans: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Derrick The Deathfin	227	79%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	91%
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	80%
Diablo III	235	89%
DiRT 3	206	85%
DiRT Showdown	219	84%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
Dishonored	224	92%
Disney Infinity	235	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	32%
Doom 3: BFG Edition	225	69%
Double Dragon Neon	224	37%
DmC Devil May Cry	227	93%
 DmC injects new life into one of the best genres in all of gaming, and does so with a style and confidence that elevates it beyond its roots.		
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	203	86%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Dragon's Crown	235	87%
Driver: San Francisco	209	68%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Droplitz	184	91%
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
D&D: Chronicles Of Mystara	233	80%
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dust 514	233	51%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	230	40%
Dynasty Warriors 8	234	71%
Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis	215	75%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome	169	85%
echochrome II	202	83%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	64%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	93%
Elefunk	170	45%
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	55%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Eurfloria	212	85%
Everybody's Golf 5	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
Explosion	203	70%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
F1 2011	211	71%
F1 2012	223	79%
F1 Race Stars	226	61%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairy Fencer F	250	43%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Family Guy: Back To The Multiverse	227	40%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
Far Cry 3	226	88%
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon	231	85%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FEAR	151	81%
FEAR 2: Project Origin	176	87%
FEAR 3	208	60%
FIFA 12	210	86%
FIFA 13	223	82%
FIFA 14	236	90%
FIFA Street (2012)	217	74%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
The Fight	199	42%
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	236	81%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	80%
Final Fantasy XIII: Lightning Returns	240	80%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	230	58%
Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	179	70%
Folklore	158	66%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Frogger: Hyper Arcade Edition	221	55%
From Dust	211	82%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
Fuse	232	73%
Game Of Thrones	220	39%
Gatling Gears	207	62%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	219	60%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
God Of War III	190	88%
God Of War: Ascension	230	90%
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	70%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	63%
Gotham City Imposters	216	78%
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 6	239	83%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
Grand Theft Auto V	236	97%
 Rockstar's latest is a masterpiece; the perfect swansong for the generation and a wonderful addition to the franchise.		
Greed Corp	191	75%
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
Grid 2	232	79%
Grid Autosport	246	67%
GTI Club+	174	72%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Guardians Of Middle-earth	227	71%
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Hitman: Absolution	225	93%
Hitman HD Trilogy	230	75%
Homefront	203	69%
The House Of The Dead 4	218	82%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	75%
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
I Am Alive	217	64%
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus HD	210	94%
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
inFamous	180	81%
inFamous 2	207	83%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
Injustice: Gods Among Us	231	80%
Inversion	220	49%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	82%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: All Star Battle	244	80%
Journey	216	87%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Jurassic Park: The Game	194	60%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Killer Is Dead	235	75%
Killzone HD	225	65%

*denotes import review

TOP TEN MOUSTACHES

- 

Captain Price
Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare
- 

Grayson
The Order: 1886
- 

Haggar
Final Fight: Double Impact
- 

Dudley
Super Street Fighter IV
- 

Burt Reynolds
Saints Row The Third
- 

Kenny
The Walking Dead
- 

Old Snake
Metal Gear Solid 4
- 

Randy Marsh
South Park: The Stick of Truth
- 

Sully
Uncharted
- 

Baron Dashforth
Foul Play

PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LOVE...



DOGS

PLAY: VALIANT HEARTS: THE GREAT WAR

Not only does it have a dog in it, *Valiant Hearts* is also a good puzzle game that takes a different approach to war as it tells the story of The Great War from a variety of perspectives.



THE EVIL WITHIN

PLAY: RESIDENT EVIL 4 HD

Mikami's latest is considered by some fans to be a greatest hits of sort (indeed, the game directly references *Resident Evil* games a number of times). If you enjoyed *The Evil Within* then, it's worth playing a game that influenced it: *Resi 4*.



CHICKENMASKS

PLAY: HOTLINE MIAMI

This surreal tale of masked murder represents one of the best action games released in recent years. It also happens to have one of the best soundtracks in videogames.



DRAGON PUNCHING

PLAY: STREET FIGHTER IV

We have still got a fair bit of time to go until we see *Street Fighter V* released on PS4, and we are a little bit too excited, so it's fortunate that the excellent *Street Fighter IV* is here to tide us over.



BEING CONFUSED

PLAY: BIOSHOCK INFINITE

Sure, it may not hit the heights of the first *BioShock*, but how many games do? It's still a brilliant FPS with some great story twists, stunning vistas and one of the best companion characters in gaming.

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Killzone 2	176	93%
Killzone 3	202	80%
Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX	236	80%
Kingdom Hearts 2.5 HD ReMIX	252	88%
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	215	70%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The King Of Fighters XIII	213	76%
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
LA Noire	206	91%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	90%
The Last Guy	171	91%
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Lead And Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Batman 2	221	80%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	67%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	76%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Lego: The Lord Of The Rings	227	85%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
Limbo	209	90%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	96%
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	225	85%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lollipop Chainsaw	221	72%
London 2012	221	45%
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	175	52%
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	42%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet 3	236	58%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Madagascar 3	224	39%
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Madden NFL 13	223	86%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Mad Riders	220	70%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalker	202	84%
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalker 2012	208	70%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	90%
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	88%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Max Payne 3	219	77%
Mass Effect 2	201	97%
Mass Effect 3	216	93%
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	225	72%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	228	91%
 <i>Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance</i> is another world-class entry in gaming's most fundamentally playable genre.		
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	91%
Metro: Last Light	231	60%
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Microbot	202	51%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	202	38%
Minecraft	240	93%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
MLB: The Show 14	245	90%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	94%
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat Vs DC Universe	173	68%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
MotoGP 13	233	74%
Motorhead	173	60%
MotorStorm	151	92%
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	76%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	50%
MX Vs ATV Alive	206	42%
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	217	53%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	85%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 2K12	211	88%
NBA 2K13	224	88%
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	91%
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	225	95%
 <i>Need For Speed: Most Wanted</i> is easily the best arcade racer of this generation. We absolutely love it.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed: The Run	213	63%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
NeverDead	215	39%
Nier	192	54%
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	227	85%
NHL 12	210	78%
NHL 13	223	74%
NIGHTS Into Dreams...	224	75%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	63%
Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge	231	80%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Nucleus	155	82%
Okami HD	225	90%
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	224	69%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	75%
The Orange Box	161	93%
Outland	207	72%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	91%
Pain	183	69%
Payday: The Heist	213	88%
Payday 2	235	79%
Peggle	189	94%
Persona 4 Arena	231	91%
 Essential for both <i>Persona</i> fans and fighting game enthusiasts, <i>Persona 4 Arena</i> is an absolute joy to play.		
Persona 4 Arena Ultimix	250	92%
PES 2012	210	74%
PixelJunk 4am	220	40%
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	90%
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	77%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	54%
Poker Night 2	232	55%
Port Royale 3: Pirates & Merchants	224	54%
Portal 2	205	95%
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: Classic	173	67%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	88%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Prototype 2	219	75%
Puddle	216	76%
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
Puppeteer	236	70%
Pure	171	80%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Dimensions	208	81%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Quantum Conundrum	221	90%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Ratchet & Clank: Q-Force	227	52%
Rag Doll Kung-Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rage	211	60%
Rainbow Moon	221	68%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	203	54%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	221	88%
Rayman Legends	235	83%
Rayman Origins	212	80%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Remember Me	232	61%
Renegade Ops	211	78%
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	82%
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	72%
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	33%
Resident Evil: Revelations HD	232	71%
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	93%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 6	223	88%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
Resistance 3	210	88%
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Retro City Rampage	228	78%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	67%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	58%
Risen 3: Titan Lords	248	25%
Risk: Factions	202	80%
Rock Band Blitz	223	80%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band 2	179	96%
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rocksmith	223	78%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	49%
Rune Factory Oceans	220	51%
RUSE	197	82%
The Saboteur	187	67%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Sacred 3	247	60%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saints Row: The Third	211	88%
Saints Row IV: Gat Out Of Hell	253	65%
SBK Generations	220	51%
Saint Seiya: Sanctuary Battle	216	52%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep1	194	90%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep2	194	92%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	195	92%
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	74%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
Section 8: Prejudice	209	80%
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK Generations	220	54%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
The Shoot	199	76%
Shoot Many Robots	217	81%
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	81%
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	76%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
The Simpsons Arcade Game	216	54%
The Simpsons Game	160	82%
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	212	70%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
SingStar	159	80%
Singularity	195	80%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	192	86%
Skullgirls	218	88%
Sleeping Dogs	222	80%
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time	230	60%
Sniper Elite V2	218	52%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2	230	55%
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Sonic Adventure 2	225	69%
Sonic CD	214	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 1	199	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 2	225	40%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed	227	88%
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Sorcery	219	76%
SoulCalibur IV	169	94%
SoulCalibur V	214	80%
South Park: The Stick of Truth	242	81%
Spec Ops: The Line	220	59%
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%
Sports Champions	196	83%
Sports Champions 2	225	65%
SSX	216	45%
Stacking	203	88%
Starhawk	219	81%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Trek	231	52%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Star Wars: Pinball	230	79%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	92%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	83%
Strength Of The Sword 3	234	81%
Strider	242	62%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%
Supremacy MMA	211	40%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syndicate	216	78%
Tales Of Graces f	222	77%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Tales Of Xillia	234	70%
Tales Of Xillia 2	249	71%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tekken 6	184	94%
Tekken Tag Tournament 2	223	90%
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	221	60%
Tetris	202	84%
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	62%
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	61%
The Last Of Us	233	94%
 When <i>The Last Of Us</i> is good (winter), it's better than anything else this gen – we do not say that lightly.		
The Last Of Us: Left Behind	242	81%
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes	224	55%
The Walking Dead	231	92%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct	231	20%
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	38%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14	231	61%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	162	72%
TMNT: Turtles In Time-Re-shelled	186	57%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tokyo Jungle	223	81%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's HAWX	177	75%
Tom Clancy's HAWX 2	196	69%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Blacklist	235	71%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	210	78%
Tomb Raider	229	90%
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	223	73%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	45%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	64%
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	73%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trine	184	85%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Tumble	198	70%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
Twisted Metal	216	68%
Two Worlds II	203	64%
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
UFC Undisputed 3	215	82%
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Ultra Street Fighter IV	246	85%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	90%
Under Siege	207	71%
Unearthed: Trail Of Ibn Battuta: Ep1	233	05%
The Unfinished Swan	225	78%
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
Vanquish	197	93%
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	220	90%
Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wakeboarding HD	195	65%
The Walking Dead: All That Remains	240	89%
The Walking Dead: 400 Days	234	83%
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	51%
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	14%
Warriors Orochi 3	217	59%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	207	49%
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	214	79%
WipEout HD	172	84%
Wizorb	222	78%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
Wonderbook: Book Of Spells	226	80%
Worms Collection	224	85%
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Ultimate Mayhem	217	80%
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship	211	63%
WRC 3 FIA World Rally Championship	225	75%
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of WrestleMania	178	80%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
WWE 13	225	55%
X-Blades	178	54%
XCOM: Enemy Unknown	224	94%
 Thinking, planning, failing and dying is back in fashion: XCOM is a phenomenal reimagining of a classic title and an instant classic in its own right.		
X-Men Arcade	203	60%
X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yaiba: Ninja Gaiden Z	242	35%
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	60%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Zen Pinball 2	224	90%
Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone	213	69%
Zone Of The Enders HD Collection	226	81%
Zuma	182	78%

PS VITA LISTING



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
A-Men	217	70%
Army Corps Of Hell	217	64%
Assassin's Creed III: Liberation	225	76%
Atelier Meruru: The Apprentice Of Arland	221	35%
Everybody's Golf	215	86%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	85%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified	227	18%
Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc	242	85%
Danganronpa 2: Goodbye Despair	249	89%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Destiny Of Spirits	244	76%
Dokuro	230	71%
Earth Defense Force 2017 Portable	230	82%
Escape Plan	216	81%
FIFA Football	216	80%
fiOw	151	90%
Flower	176	85%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Gravity Rush	219	86%
Hustle Miami	233	85%
Hustle Kings	216	81%
Joe Danger	194	96%
Killzone: Mercenary	236	88%
LittleBigPlanet	223	93%
Little Deviants	215	69%
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	85%
MGS HD Collection	221	70%
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	59%
Mortal Kombat	219	83%
MotorStorm RC	217	81%
Muramasa Rebirth	234	80%
New Little King's Story	224	70%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	72%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	230	60%
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	86%
Orgarhythm	230	55%
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
Persona 4 Golden	228	94%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
Puddle	222	82%
Rayman Origins	216	84%
Reality Fighters	215	52%
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	54%
Ridge Racer	216	48%
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Silent Hill: Book Of Memories	225	32%
Sorcery Saga: Curse of the Great Curry God	240	70%
Soul Sacrifice	232	85%
Sound Shapes	223	88%
Superfrog HD	234	41%
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz	224	78%
Sumonier: Demon Arts	230	46%
Super Stardust Delta	216	84%
Tearaway	239	80%
Terraria	232	85%
Touch My Katamari	216	83%
Toukiden: The Age Of Demons	241	86%
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	216	80%
Uncharted: Fight For Fortune	227	83%
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	83%
Unit 13	216	67%
Velocity Ultra	233	80%
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	81%
Virtue's Last Reward	227	84%
WipEout 2048	215	87%

*denotes import review

PLAYING THE PLAYLIST

Watch out! Games!



WHAT
(have they been playing?)
Bloodborne

WHY (was it chosen?)
The sun won't praise itself...

LUKE ALBIGÉS

DESTINY HAD A good run, but it's out of the picture now until House Of Wolves – I've got and done everything, leaving me time to play other games. Nothing was going to stop me playing a new *Souls* game, even one that doesn't have 'Souls' in the title – having taken a week off just to get seriously stuck into *Bloodborne*, I can safely say I was not disappointed. It's bleak, it's stunning and it's hard as nails... everything I wanted it to be, basically. I'll probably dive back into *Dark Souls II* on PS4 when I'm done. I guess I'm just a glutton for punishment...



WHAT
(have they been playing?)
Transistor

WHY (was it chosen?)
It was free

PAUL WALKER-EMIG

I'VE BEEN MEANING to get around to playing *Transistor* for a while, so when the game popped up on PS Plus I was delighted. There can be few games that look as good as this on PS4. Indeed, the panache and style with which *Transistor's* world is crafted, combined with its noir-influenced storytelling and tone meant that I fell for it immediately. I'm finding that the mix between real time and turn-based combat that the game offers is perhaps better in theory than in practice, but that's a minor complaint about a game that I'm very much enjoying.



Imagine Publishing Ltd
Richmond House 33 Richmond Hill
Bournemouth Dorset BH2 6EZ
☎ +44 (0) 1202 586200
Web: www.play-mag.co.uk
www.imagine-publishing.co.uk
www.greatdigitalmags.com

Magazine team

Editor In Chief **Ryan King**
Deputy Editor **Luke Albígés**
luke.albiges@imagine-publishing.co.uk
☎ 01202 586269
Designer **Liam Warr**
Production Editor **Drew Sleep**
Staff Writer **Paul Walker-Emig**
Photographer **James Sheppard**
Senior Art Editor **Andy Downes**
Publishing Director **Aaron Asadi**
Head of Design **Ross Andrews**

Contributors

Adam Barnes, Mark Dodge, Steve Holmes, Darran Jones,
Dom Peppiatt, Ed Smith, Josh West

Advertising

Digital or printed media packs are available on request.

Head of Sales Hang Deretz

☎ 01202 586442
hang.deretz@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Account Manager Anthony Godsell

☎ 01202 586420
anthony.godsell@imagine-publishing.co.uk

International

Play is available for licensing. Contact the International
department to discuss partnership opportunities.

Head of International Licensing Cathy Blackman

☎ +44 (0) 1202 586401
licensing@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Subscriptions

play@servicehelpline.co.uk

☎ UK 0844 848 8404

☎ Overseas +44 1795 592 875

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Circulation

Head of Circulation Darren Pearce

☎ 01202 586200

Production

Production Director Jane Hawkins

☎ 01202 586200

Founder

Damian Butt **Group Managing Director**

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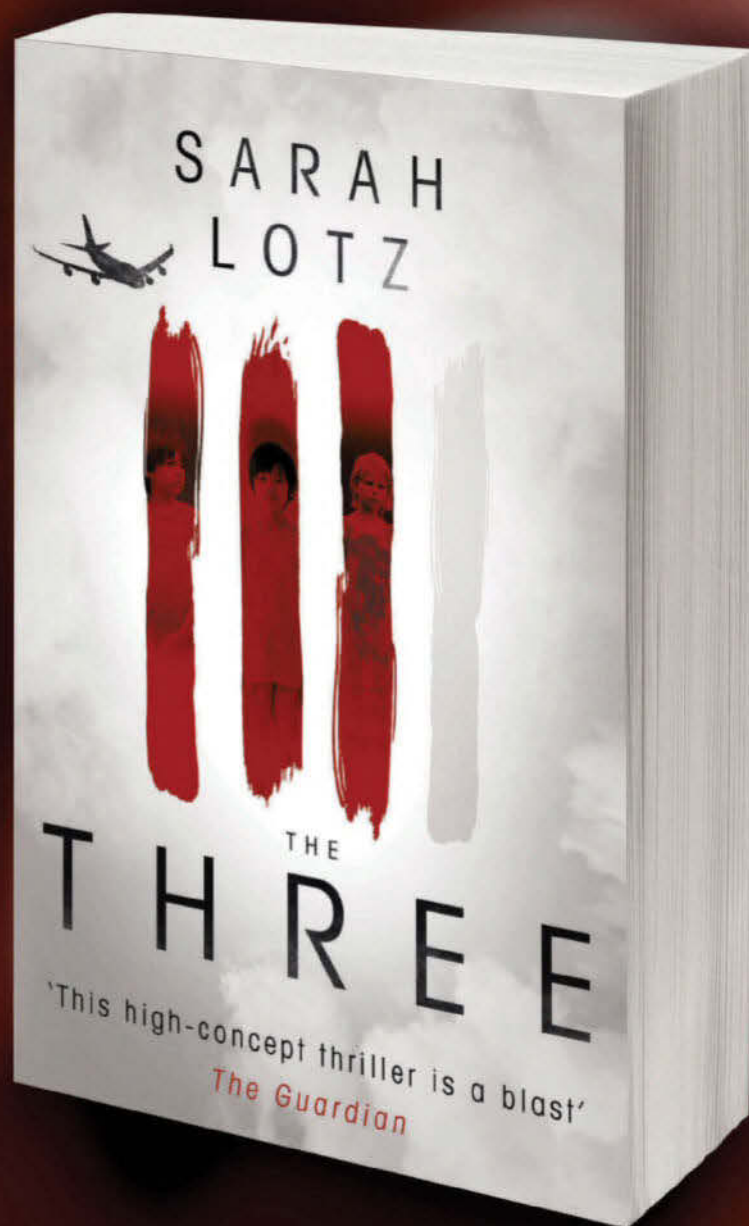
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